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Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER LV.

AN ABSENT LOVER RETURNS.



AND now it was late June ; and to Molly's and her father's extreme urgency in pushing, and Mr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick's affectionate persistency in pulling, Cynthia had yielded, and had gone back to finish her interrupted visit in London, but not before the bruit of her previous sudden return to nurse Molly had told strongly in her favour in the fluctuating opinion of the little town. Her affair with Mr. Preston was thrust into the shade ; while every one was speaking of her warm heart. Under the gleam of Molly's recovery everything assumed a rosy hue, as indeed became the time when actual roses were fully in bloom.

One morning Mrs. Gibson brought Molly a great basket of flowers, that had been sent from the Hall. Molly still breakfasted in bed, but had just come down, and was now well enough to arrange the flowers for the drawing-room, and as she did so with these blossoms, she made some comments on each.

"Ah! these white pinks! They were Mrs. Hamley's favourite flower; and so like her! This little bit of sweetbriar, it quite scents the room. It has pricked my fingers, but never mind. Oh, mamma, look at this rose! I forget its name, but it is very rare, and grows up in the sheltered corner of the wall, near the mulberry-tree. Roger bought the tree for his mother with his own money when he was quite a boy; he showed it me, and made me notice it."

"I daresay it was Roger who got it now. You heard papa say he had seen him yesterday."

"No! Roger! Roger come home!" said Molly, turning first red, then very white.

"Yes. Oh, I remember you had gone to bed before papa came in, and he was called off early to tiresome Mrs. Beale. Yes, Roger turned up at the Hall the day before yesterday."

But Molly leaned back against her chair, too faint to do more at the flowers for some time. She had been startled by the suddenness of the news. "Roger come home!"

It happened that Mr. Gibson was unusually busy on this particular day, and he did not return until late in the afternoon. But Molly kept her place in the drawing-room all the time, not even going to take her customary siesta, so anxious was she to hear everything about Roger's return, which as yet appeared to her almost incredible. But it was quite natural in reality; the long monotony of her illness had made her lose all count of time. When Roger left England, his idea was to coast round Africa on the eastern side until he reached the Cape; and thence to make what further journey or voyage might seem to him best in pursuit of his scientific objects. To Cape Town all his letters had been addressed of late; and there, two months before, he had received the intelligence of Osborne's death, as well as Cynthia's hasty letter of relinquishment. He did not consider that he was doing wrong in returning to England immediately, and reporting himself to the gentlemen who had sent him out, with a full explanation of the circumstances relating to Osborne's private marriage and sudden death. He offered, and they accepted his offer, to go out again for any time that they might think equivalent to the five months he was yet engaged to them for. They were most of them gentlemen of property, and saw the full importance of proving the marriage of an eldest son, and installing his child as the natural heir to a long-descended estate. This much information, but in a more condensed form, Mr. Gibson gave to Molly, in a very few minutes. She sat up on her sofa, looking very pretty with the flush on her cheeks, and the brightness in her eyes.

"Well!" said she when her father stopped speaking.

"Well! what?" asked he, playfully.

"Oh! why, such a number of things. I've been waiting all day to ask you all about everything. How is he looking?"

"If a young man of twenty-four ever does take to growing taller, I

should say that he was taller. As it is, I suppose it is only that he looks broader, stronger—more muscular."

"Oh! is he changed?" asked Molly, a little disturbed by this account.

"No, not changed; and yet not the same. He is as brown as a berry for one thing; caught a little of the negro tinge, and a beard as fine and sweeping as my bay-mare's tail."

"A beard! But go on, papa. Does he talk as he used to do? I should know his voice amongst ten thousand."

"I did not catch any Hottentot twang, if that's what you mean. Nor did he say, 'Cæsar and Pompey berry much alike, 'specially Pompey,' which is the only specimen of negro language I can remember just at this moment."

"And which I never could see the wit of," said Mrs. Gibson, who had come into the room after the conversation had begun; and did not understand what it was aiming at. Molly fidgeted; she wanted to go on with her questions and keep her father to definite and matter-of-fact answers, and she knew that when his wife chimed into a conversation, Mr. Gibson was very apt to find out that he must go about some necessary piece of business.

"Tell me, how are they all getting on together?" It was an inquiry which she did not make in general before Mrs. Gibson, for Molly and her father had tacitly agreed to keep silence on what they knew or had observed, respecting the three who formed the present family at the Hall.

"Oh!" said Mr. Gibson, "Roger is evidently putting everything to rights in his firm, quiet way."

"Things to rights. Why, what's wrong?" asked Mrs. Gibson quickly. "The squire and the French daughter-in-law don't get on well together, I suppose? I am always so glad Cynthia acted with the promptitude she did; it would have been very awkward for her to have been mixed up with all these complications. Poor Roger! to find himself supplanted by a child when he comes home!"

"You were not in the room, my dear, when I was telling Molly of the reasons for Roger's return; it was to put his brother's child at once into his rightful and legal place. So now, when he finds the work partly done to his hands, he is happy and gratified in proportion."

"Then he is not much affected by Cynthia's breaking off her engagement?" (Mrs. Gibson could afford to call it an "engagement" now.) "I never did give him credit for very deep feelings."

"On the contrary, he feels it very acutely. He and I had a long talk about it, yesterday."

Both Molly and Mrs. Gibson would have liked to have heard something more about this conversation; but Mr. Gibson did not choose to go on with the subject. The only point which he disclosed was that Roger had insisted on his right to have a personal interview with Cynthia; and,

on hearing that she was in London at present, had deferred any further explanation or expostulation by letter, preferring to await her return.

Molly went on with her questions on other subjects. "And Mrs. Osborne Hamley? How is she?"

"Wonderfully brightened up by Roger's presence. I don't think I have ever seen her smile before; but she gives him the sweetest smiles from time to time. They are evidently good friends; and she loses her strange startled look when she speaks to him. I suspect she has been quite aware of the squire's wish that she should return to France; and has been hard put to it to decide whether to leave her child or not. The idea that she would have to make some such decision came upon her when she was completely shattered by grief and illness, and she has not had any one to consult as to her duty until Roger came, upon whom she has evidently firm reliance. He told me something of this himself."

"You seem to have had quite a long conversation with him, papa!"

"Yes. I was going to see old Abraham, when the squire called to me over the hedge, as I was jogging along. He told me the news; and there was no resisting his invitation to come back and lunch with them. Besides, one gets a great deal of meaning out of Roger's words; it did not take so very long a time to hear this much."

"I should think he would come and call upon us soon," said Mrs. Gibson to Molly; "and then we shall see how much we can manage to hear."

"Do you think he will, papa?" said Molly, more doubtfully. She remembered the last time he was in that very room, and the hopes with which he left it; and she fancied that she could see traces of this thought in her father's countenance at his wife's speech.

"I cannot tell, my dear. Until he is quite convinced of Cynthia's intentions, it cannot be very pleasant for him to come on mere visits of ceremony to the house in which he has known her; but he is one who will always do what he thinks right, whether pleasant or not."

Mrs. Gibson could hardly wait till her husband had finished his sentence before she testified against a part of it.

"Convinced of Cynthia's intentions! I should think she had made them pretty clear! What more does the man want?"

"He is not as yet convinced that the letter was not written in a fit of temporary feeling. I have told him that this was true; although I did not feel it my place to explain to him the causes of that feeling. He believes that he can induce her to resume the former footing. I do not; and I have told him so; but of course he needs the full conviction that she alone can give him."

"Poor Cynthia! My poor child!" said Mrs. Gibson, plaintively. "What she has exposed herself to by letting herself be over-persuaded by that man!"

Mr. Gibson's eyes flashed fire. But he kept his lips tight closed; and only said, "That man, indeed!" quite below his breath.

Molly, too, had been damped by an expression or two in her father's speech. "Mere visits of ceremony!" Was it so, indeed? A "mere visit of ceremony!" Whatever it was, the call was paid before many days were over. That he felt all the awkwardness of his position towards Mrs. Gibson—that he was in reality suffering pain all the time—was but too evident to Molly; but of course Mrs. Gibson saw nothing of this in her gratification at the proper respect paid to her by one whose name was already in the newspapers that chronicled his return, and about whom already Lord Cumnor and the Towers family had been making inquiry.

Molly was sitting in her pretty white invalid's dress, half reading, half dreaming, for the June air was so clear and ambient, the garden so full of bloom, the trees so full of leaf, that reading by the open window was only a pretence at such a time; besides which Mrs. Gibson continually interrupted her with remarks about the pattern of her worsted-work. It was after lunch—orthodox calling time, when Maria ushered in Mr. Roger Hamley. Molly started up; and then stood shyly and quietly in her place while a bronzed, bearded, grave man came into the room, in whom she at first had to seek for the merry boyish face she knew by heart only two years ago. But months in the climates in which Roger had been travelling age as much as years in more temperate districts. And constant thought and anxiety while in daily peril of life deepen the lines of character upon a face. Moreover, the circumstances that had of late affected him personally were not of a nature to make him either buoyant or cheerful. But his voice was the same; that was the first point of the old friend Molly caught, when he addressed her in a tone far softer than he used in speaking conventional politenesses to her stepmother.

"I was so sorry to hear how ill you had been! You are looking but delicate!" letting his eyes rest upon her face with affectionate examination. Molly felt herself colour all over with the consciousness of his regard. To do something to put an end to it, she looked up, and showed him her beautiful soft grey eyes, which he never remembered to have noticed before. She smiled at him as she blushed still deeper, and said,—

"Oh! I am quite strong now to what I was. It would be a shame to be ill when everything is in its full summer beauty."

"I have heard how deeply we—I am indebted to you—my father can hardly praise you——"

"Please don't," said Molly, the tears coming into her eyes in spite of herself. He seemed to understand her at once; he went on as if speaking to Mrs. Gibson: "Indeed my little sister-in-law is never weary of talking about Monsieur le Docteur, as she calls your husband!"

"I have not had the pleasure of making Mrs. Osborne Hamley's acquaintance yet," said Mrs. Gibson, suddenly aware of a duty which might have been expected from her, "and I must beg you to apologize to her for my remissness. But Molly has been such a care and anxiety to me—

for, you know, I look upon her quite as my own child—that I really have not gone anywhere, excepting to the Towers perhaps I should say, which is just like another home to me. And then I understood that Mrs. Osborne Hamley was thinking of returning to France before long? Still it was very remiss.”

The little trap thus set for news of what might be going on in the Hamley family was quite successful. Roger answered her thus:—

“I am sure Mrs. Osborne Hamley will be very glad to see any friends of the family, as soon as she is a little stronger. I hope she will not go back to France at all. She is an orphan, and I trust we shall induce her to remain with my father. But at present nothing is arranged.” Then, as if glad to have got over his “visit of ceremony,” he got up and took leave. When he was at the door he looked back, having, as he thought, a word more to say; but he quite forgot what it was, for he surprised Molly’s intent gaze, and sudden confusion at discovery, and went away as soon as he could.

“Poor Osborne was right!” said he. “She has grown into delicate fragrant beauty just as he said she would: or is it the character which has formed her face? Now the next time I enter these doors it will be to learn my fate!”

Mr. Gibson had told his wife of Roger’s desire to have a personal interview with Cynthia, rather with a view to her repeating what he said to her daughter. He did not see any exact necessity for this, it is true; but he thought that it might be advisable that she should know all the truth in which she was concerned, and he told his wife this. But she took the affair into her own management, and, although she apparently agreed with Mr. Gibson, she never named the affair to Cynthia; all that she said to her was—

“Your old admirer, Roger Hamley, has come home in a great hurry in consequence of poor dear Osborne’s unexpected decease. He must have been rather surprised to find the widow and her little boy established at the Hall. He came to call here the other day, and made himself really rather agreeable, although his manners are not improved by the society he has kept on his travels. Still I prophesy he will be considered as a fashionable ‘lion,’ and perhaps the very uncouthness which jars against my sense of refinement, may even become admired in a scientific traveller, who has been into more desert places, and eaten more extraordinary food, than any other Englishman of the day. I suppose he has given up all chance of inheriting the estate, for I hear he talks of returning to Africa, and becoming a regular wanderer. Your name was not mentioned, but I believe he inquired about you from Mr. Gibson.”

“There!” said she to herself, as she folded up and directed this letter; “that can’t disturb her, or make her uncomfortable. And it’s all the truth too, or very near it. Of course he’ll want to see her when she comes back; but by that time I do hope Mr. Henderson will have proposed again, and that that affair will be all settled.”

But Cynthia returned to Hollingsford one Tuesday morning, and in answer to her mother's anxious inquiries on the subject, would only say that Mr. Henderson had not offered again. Why should he? She had refused him once, and he did not know the reason of her refusal, at least one of the reasons. She did not know if she should have taken him if there had been no such person as Roger Hamley in the world. No! Uncle and aunt Kirkpatrick had never heard anything about Roger's offer,—nor had her cousins. She had always declared her wish to keep it a secret, and she had not mentioned it to any one, whatever other people might have done." Underneath this light and careless vein there were other feelings; but Mrs. Gibson was not one to probe beneath the surface. She had set her heart on Mr. Henderson's marrying Cynthia very early in their acquaintance: and to know, firstly, that the same wish had entered into his head, and that Roger's attachment to Cynthia, with its consequences, had been the obstacle; and secondly, that Cynthia herself with all the opportunities of propinquity that she had lately had, had failed to provoke a repetition of the offer,—it was, as Mrs. Gibson said, "enough to provoke a saint." All the rest of the day she alluded to Cynthia as a disappointing and ungrateful daughter; Molly could not make out why, and resented it for Cynthia, until the latter said, bitterly, "Never mind, Molly. Mamma is only vexed because Mr.——because I have not come back an engaged young lady."

"Yes; and I am sure you might have done,—there's the ingratitude! I am not so unjust as to want you to do what you can't do!" said Mrs. Gibson, querulously.

"But where's the ingratitude, mamma? I am very much tired, and perhaps that makes me stupid; but I cannot see the ingratitude." Cynthia spoke very wearily, leaning her head back on the sofa-cushions, as if she did not much care to have an answer.

"Why, don't you see we are doing all we can for you; dressing you well, and sending you to London; and when you might relieve us of the expense of all this, you don't."

"No! Cynthia, I will speak," said Molly, all crimson with indignation, and pushing away Cynthia's restraining hand. "I am sure papa does not feel, and does not mind, any expense he incurs about his daughters. And I know quite well that he does not wish us to marry, unless——" She faltered and stopped.

"Unless what?" said Mrs. Gibson, half-mocking.

"Unless we love some one very dearly indeed," said Molly, in a low, firm tone.

"Well, after this tirade—really rather indelicate, I must say—I have done. I will neither help nor hinder any love-affairs of you two young ladies. In my days we were glad of the advice of our elders." And she left the room to put into fulfilment an idea which had just struck her: to write a confidential letter to Mrs. Kirkpatrick, giving her her

version of Cynthia's "unfortunate entanglement" and "delicate sense of honour," and hints of her entire indifference to all the masculine portion of the world, Mr. Henderson being dexterously excluded from the category.

"Oh, dear!" said Molly, throwing herself back in a chair, with a sigh of relief, as Mrs. Gibson left the room; "how cross I do get since I have been ill. But I could not bear her to speak as if papa grudged you anything."

"I am sure he does not, Molly. You need not defend him on my account. But I am sorry mamma still looks upon me as "an encumbrance," as the advertisements in *The Times* always call us unfortunate children. But I have been an encumbrance to her all my life. I am getting very much into despair about everything, Molly. I shall try my luck in Russia. I have heard of a situation as English governess at Moscow, in a family owning whole provinces of land, and serfs by the hundred. I put off writing my letter till I came home; I shall be as much out of the way there as if I was married. Oh, dear! travelling all night is not good for the spirits. How is Mr. Preston?"

"Oh, he has taken Cumnor Grange, three miles away, and he never comes in to the Hollingford tea-parties now. I saw him once in the street, but it's a question which of us tried the hardest to get out of the other's way."

"You've not said anything about Roger, yet."

"No; I did not know if you would care to hear. He is very much older-looking; quite a strong grown-up man. And papa says he is much graver. Ask me any questions, if you want to know, but I have only seen him once."

"I was in hopes he would have left the neighbourhood by this time. Mamma said he was going to travel again."

"I can't tell," said Molly. "I suppose you know," she continued, but hesitating a little before she spoke, "that he wishes to see you."

"No! I never heard. I wish he would have been satisfied with my letter. It was as decided as I could make it. If I say I won't see him, I wonder if his will or mine will be the strongest?"

"His," said Molly. "But you must see him; you owe it to him. He will never be satisfied without it."

"Suppose he talks me round into resuming the engagement? I should only break it off again."

"Surely you can't be 'talked round' if your mind is made up. But perhaps it is not really, Cynthia?" asked she, with a little wistful anxiety betraying itself in her face.

"It is quite made up. I am going to teach little Russian girls; and am never going to marry nobody."

"You are not serious, Cynthia. And yet it is a very serious thing."

But Cynthia went into one of her wild moods, and no more reason or sensible meaning was to be got out of her at the time.

CHAPTER LVI.

"OFF WITH THE OLD LOVE, AND ON WITH THE NEW."

THE next morning saw Mrs. Gibson in a much more contented frame of mind. She had written and posted her letter, and the next thing was to keep Cynthia in what she called a reasonable state, or, in other words, to try and cajole her into docility. But it was so much labour lost. Cynthia had already received a letter from Mr. Henderson before she came down to breakfast,—a declaration of love, a proposal of marriage as clear as words could make it; together with an intimation that, unable to wait for the slow delays of the post, he was going to follow her down to Hollingford, and would arrive at the same time that she had done herself on the previous day. Cynthia said nothing about this letter to any one. She came late into the breakfast-room, after Mr. and Mrs. Gibson had finished the actual business of the meal; but her unpunctuality was quite accounted for by the fact that she had been travelling all the night before. Molly was not as yet strong enough to get up so early. Cynthia hardly spoke, and did not touch her food. Mr. Gibson went about his daily business, and Cynthia and her mother were left alone.

"My dear," said Mrs. Gibson, "you are not eating your breakfast as you should do. I am afraid our meals seem very plain and homely to you after those in Hyde Park Street?"

"No," said Cynthia; "I am not hungry, that's all."

"If we were as rich as your uncle, I should feel it to be both a duty and a pleasure to keep an elegant table; but limited means are a sad clog to one's wishes. I don't suppose that, work as he will, Mr. Gibson can earn more than he does at present; while the capabilities of the law are boundless. Lord Chancellor! Titles as well as fortune!"

Cynthia was almost too much absorbed in her own reflections to reply, but she did say,—

"Hundreds of briefless barristers. Take the other side, mamma."

"Well; but I have noticed that many of these have private fortunes."

"Perhaps. Mamma, I expect Mr. Henderson will come and call this morning."

"Oh, my precious child! But how do you know? My darling Cynthia, am I to congratulate you?"

"No! I suppose I must tell you. I have had a letter this morning from him, and he is coming down by the Umpire to-day."

"But he has offered? He surely must mean to offer, at any rate?"

Cynthia played with her teaspoon before she replied; then she looked up, like one startled from a dream, and caught the echo of her mother's question.

"Offered! yes, I suppose he has."

"And you accept him? Say yes, Cynthia, and make me happy!"

"I shan't say yes to make any one happy except myself, and the

Russian scheme has great charms for me." She said this to plague her mother, and lessen Mrs. Gibson's exuberance of joy, it must be confessed; for her mind was pretty well made up. But it did not affect Mrs. Gibson, who affixed even less truth to it than there really was. The idea of a residence in a new, strange country, among new, strange people, was not without allurements to Cynthia.

"You always look nice, dear; but don't you think you had better put on that pretty lilac silk?"

"I shall not vary a thread or a shred from what I have got on now."

"You dear wilful creature! you know you always look lovely in whatever you put on." So, kissing her daughter, Mrs. Gibson left the room, intent on the lunch which should impress Mr. Henderson at once with an idea of family refinement.

Cynthia went upstairs to Molly; she was inclined to tell her about Mr. Henderson, but she found it impossible to introduce the subject naturally, so she left it to time to reveal the future as gradually as it might. Molly was tired with a bad night; and her father, in his flying visit to his darling before going out, had advised her to stay upstairs for the greater part of the morning, and to keep quiet in her own room till after her early dinner, so Time had not a fair chance of telling her what he had in store in his budget. Mrs. Gibson sent an apology to Molly for not paying her her usual morning visit, and told Cynthia to give Mr. Henderson's probable coming as a reason for her occupation downstairs. But Cynthia did no such thing. She kissed Molly, and sate silently by her, holding her hand; till at length she jumped up, and said, "You shall be left alone now, little one. I want you to be very well and very bright this afternoon: so rest now." And Cynthia left her, and went to her own room, locked the door, and began to think.

Some one was thinking about her at the same time, and it was not Mr. Henderson. Roger had heard from Mr. Gibson that Cynthia had come home, and he was resolving to go to her at once, and have one strong, manly attempt to overcome the obstacles, whatever they might be—and of their nature he was not fully aware—that she had conjured up against the continuance of their relation to each other. He left his father—he left them all—and went off into the woods, to be alone until the time came when he might mount his horse and ride over to put his fate to the touch. He was as careful as ever not to interfere with the morning hours that were tabooed to him of old; but waiting was very hard work when he knew that she was so near, and the time so near at hand.

Yet he rode slowly, compelling himself to quietness and patience when he was once really on the way to her.

"Mrs. Gibson at home? Miss Kirkpatrick?" he asked of the servant, Maria, who opened the door. She was confused, but he did not notice it.

"I think so; I am not sure! Will you walk up into the drawing-room, sir? Miss Gibson is there, I know."

So he went upstairs, all his nerves on one strain for the coming interview with Cynthia. It was either a relief or a disappointment, he was not sure which, to find only Molly in the room. Molly, half lying on the couch in the bow-window which commanded the garden; draped in soft white drapery, very white herself, and a laced half-handkerchief tied over her head to save her from any ill effects of the air that blew in through the open window. He was so ready to speak to Cynthia that he hardly knew what to say to any one else.

"I am afraid you are not so well," he said to Molly, who sat up to receive him, and who suddenly began to tremble with emotion.

"I am a little tired, that's all," said she; and then she was quite silent, hoping that he might go, and yet somehow wishing him to stay. But he took a chair and placed it near her, opposite to the window. He thought that surely Maria would tell Miss Kirkpatrick that she was wanted, and that at any moment he might hear her light quick footstep on the stairs. He thought he ought to talk, but he could not think of anything to say. The pink flush came out on Molly's cheeks; once or twice she was on the point of speaking, but again she thought better of it; and the pauses between their faint disjointed remarks became longer and longer. Suddenly, in one of these pauses, the merry murmur of distant happy voices in the garden came nearer and nearer; Molly looked more and more uneasy and flushed, and in spite of herself kept watching Roger's face. He could see over her into the garden. A sudden deep colour overspread him, as if his heart had sent its blood out coursing at full gallop. Cynthia and Mr. Henderson had come in sight; he eagerly talking to her as he bent forward to look into her face; she, her looks half averted in pretty shyness, was evidently coquetting about some flowers, which she either would not give, or would not take. Just then, for the lovers had emerged from the shrubbery into comparatively public life, Maria was seen approaching; apparently she had feminine tact enough to induce Cynthia to leave her present admirer, and go a few steps to meet her to receive the whispered message that Mr. Roger Hamley was there, and wished to speak to her. Roger could see her startled gesture, she turned back to say something to Mr. Henderson before coming towards the house. Now Roger spoke to Molly—spoke hurriedly, spoke hoarsely.

"Molly, tell me! It is too late for me to speak to Cynthia? I came on purpose. Who is that man?"

"Mr. Henderson. He only came to-day—but now he is her accepted lover. Oh, Roger, forgive me the pain!"

"Tell her I have been, and am gone. Send out word to her. Don't let her be interrupted."

And Roger ran downstairs at full speed, and Molly heard the passionate clang of the outer door. He had hardly left the house before Cynthia entered the room, pale and resolute.

"Where is he?" she said, looking around, as if he might yet be hidden.

"Gone!" said Molly, very faint.

"Gone. Oh, what a relief! It seems to be my fate never to be off with the old lover before I am on with the new, and yet I did write as decidedly as I could. Why, Molly, what's the matter?" for now Molly had fainted away utterly. Cynthia flew to the bell, summoned Maria, water, salts, wine, anything; and as soon as Molly, gasping and miserable, became conscious again, she wrote a little pencil-note to Mr. Henderson, bidding him return to the George, whence he had come in the morning, and saying that if he obeyed her at once, he might be allowed to call again in the evening, otherwise she would not see him till the next day. This she sent down by Maria, and the unlucky man never believed but that it was Miss Gibson's sudden indisposition in the first instance that had deprived him of his charmer's company. He comforted himself for the long solitary afternoon by writing to tell all his friends of his happiness, and amongst them uncle and aunt Kirkpatrick, who received his letter by the same post as that discreet epistle of Mrs. Gibson's, which she had carefully arranged to reveal as much as she wished, and no more.

"Was he very terrible?" asked Cynthia, as she sate with Molly in the stillness of Mrs. Gibson's dressing-room.

"Oh, Cynthia, it was such pain to see him, he suffered so!"

"I don't like people of deep feelings," said Cynthia, pouting. "They don't suit me. Why could not he let me go without this fuss. I'm not worth his caring for!"

"You have the happy gift of making people love you. Remember Mr. Preston,—he too would not give up hope."

"Now I won't have you classing Roger Hamley and Mr. Preston together in the same sentence. One was as much too bad for me, as the other is too good. Now I hope that man in the garden is the *juste milieu*,—I'm that myself; for I don't think I'm vicious, and I know I'm not virtuous."

"Do you really like him enough to marry him?" asked Molly earnestly. "Do think, Cynthia. It won't do to go on throwing your lovers off; you give pain that I am sure you do not mean to do,—that you cannot understand."

"Perhaps I can't. I'm not offended. I never set up for what I am not, and I know I'm not constant. I have told Mr. Henderson so——" She stopped, blushing and smiling at the recollection.

"You have! and what did he say?"

"That he liked me just as I was; so you see he's fairly warned. Only he is a little afraid, I suppose,—for he wants me to be married very soon, almost directly in fact. But I don't know if I shall give way,—you hardly saw him, Molly,—but he's coming again to-night, and mind, I'll never forgive you if you don't think him very charming. I believe I cared for him when he offered all those months ago, but I tried to think I didn't; only sometimes I really was so unhappy, I thought I must put an iron-band round my heart to keep it from breaking, like the Faithful

John of the German story,—do you remember, Molly?—how when his master came to his crown and his fortune, and his lady-love, after innumerable trials and disgraces, and was driving away from the church where he'd been married in a coach and six, with Faithful John behind, the happy couple heard three great cracks in succession, and on inquiring, they were the iron-bands round his heart, that Faithful John had worn all during the time of his master's tribulation, to keep it from breaking."

In the evening Mr. Henderson came. Molly had been very curious to see him; and when she saw him she was not sure whether she liked him or not. He was handsome, without being conceited; gentlemanly, without being foolishly fine. He talked easily, and never said a silly thing. He was perfectly well-appointed, yet never seemed to have given a thought to his dress. He was good-tempered and kind; not without some of the cheerful flippancy of repartee which belonged to his age and profession, and which his age and profession are apt to take for wit. But he wanted something in Molly's eyes, at any rate, in this first interview, and in her heart of hearts she thought him rather commonplace. But of course she said nothing of this to Cynthia, who was evidently as happy as she could be. Mrs. Gibson, too, was in the seventh heaven of ecstasy, and spoke but little; but what she did say, expressed the highest sentiments in the finest language. Mr. Gibson was not with them for long, but while he was there he was evidently studying the unconscious Mr. Henderson with his dark penetrating eyes. Mr. Henderson behaved exactly as he ought to have done to everybody; respectful to Mr. Gibson, deferential to Mrs. Gibson, friendly to Molly, devoted to Cynthia. The next time Mr. Gibson found Molly alone, he began,—

"Well! and how do you like the new relation that is to be?"

"It is difficult to say. I think he is very nice in all his bits, but—rather dull on the whole."

"I think him perfection," said Mr. Gibson, to Molly's surprise; but in an instant afterwards she saw that he had been speaking ironically. He went on. "I don't wonder she preferred him to Roger Hamley. Such scents! such gloves! And then his hair and his cravat!"

"Now, papa, you are not fair. He is a great deal more than that. One could see that he had very good feeling; and he is very handsome, and very much attached to her."

"So was Roger. However, I must confess I shall only be too glad to have her married. She is a girl who will always have some love-affair on hand, and will always be apt to slip through a man's fingers if he does not look sharp; as I was saying to Roger——"

"You have seen him, then, since he was here?"

"Met him in the street."

"How was he?"

"I don't suppose he had been going through the pleasantest thing in the world; but he'll get over it before long. He spoke with sense and resignation, and did not say much about it; but one could see that he

was feeling it pretty sharply. He's had three months to think it over, remember. The squire, I should guess, is showing more indignation. He is boiling over, that any one should reject his son! The enormity of the sin never seems to have been apparent to him till now, when he sees how Roger is affected by it. Indeed, with the exception of myself, I don't know one reasonable father; eh, Molly?"

Whatever else Mr. Henderson might be, he was an impatient lover; he wanted to marry Cynthia directly—next week—the week after. At any rate before the long vacation, so that they could go abroad at once. Trousseaux, and preliminary ceremonies, he gave to the winds. Mr. Gibson, generous as usual, called Cynthia aside a morning or two after her engagement, and put a hundred-pound note into her hands.

"There! that's to pay your expenses to Russia and back. I hope you'll find your pupils obedient."

To his surprise, and rather to his discomfiture, Cynthia threw her arms round his neck and kissed him.

"You are the kindest person I know," said she; "and I don't know how to thank you in words."

"If you tumble my shirt-collars again in that way, I'll charge you for the washing. Just now, too, when I'm trying so hard to be trim and elegant, like your Mr. Henderson."

"But you do like him, don't you?" said Cynthia, pleadingly. "He does so like you."

"Of course. We are all angels just now, and you are an arch-angel. I hope he'll wear as well as Roger."

Cynthia looked grave. "That was a very silly affair," she said. "We were two as unsuitable people——"

"It has ended, and that's enough. Besides, I've no more time to waste; and there is your smart young man coming here in all haste."

Mr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick sent all manner of congratulations; and Mrs. Gibson, in a private letter, assured Mrs. Kirkpatrick that her ill-timed confidence about Roger should be considered as quite private. For as soon as Mr. Henderson had made his appearance in Hollingford, she had written a second letter, entreating them not to allude to anything she might have said in her first; which she said was written in such excitement on discovering the real state of her daughter's affections, that she had hardly known what she had said, and had exaggerated some things, and misunderstood others; all that she did know now was, that Mr. Henderson had just proposed to Cynthia, and was accepted, and that they were as happy as the day was long, and ("excuse the vanity of a mother,") made a most lovely couple. So Mr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick wrote back an equally agreeable letter, praising Mr. Henderson, admiring Cynthia, and generally congratulatory; insisting into the bargain that the marriage should take place from their house in Hyde Park Street, and that Mr. and Mrs. Gibson and Molly should all come up and pay them a visit. There was a little postscript at the end. "Surely you do not mean the famous traveller,

Hamley, about whose discoveries all our scientific men are so much excited. You speak of him as a young Hamley, who went to Africa. Answer this question, pray, for Helen is most anxious to know." This P.S. being in Helen's handwriting. In her exultation at the general success of everything, and desire for sympathy, Mrs. Gibson read parts of this letter to Molly; the postscript among the rest. It made a deeper impression on Molly than even the proposed kindness of the visit to London.

There were some family consultations; but the end of them all was that the Kirkpatrick invitation was accepted. There were many small reasons for this, which were openly acknowledged; but there was one general and unspoken wish to have the ceremony performed out of the immediate neighbourhood of the two men whom Cynthia had previously rejected; that was the word now to be applied to her treatment of them. So Molly was ordered and enjoined and entreated to become strong as soon as possible, in order that her health might not prevent her attending the marriage. Mr. Gibson himself, though he thought it his duty to damp the excellent anticipations of his wife and her daughter, being not at all averse to the prospect of going to London, and seeing half-a-dozen old friends, and many scientific exhibitions, independently of the very fair amount of liking which he had for his host, Mr. Kirkpatrick himself.

CHAPTER LVII.

BRIDAL VISITS AND ADIEUX.

THE whole town of Hollingford came to congratulate and inquire into particulars. Some indeed—Mrs. Goodenough at the head of this class of malcontents—thought that they were defrauded of their right to a fine show by Cynthia's being married in London. Even Lady Cumnor was moved into action. She, who had hardly ever paid calls "out of her own sphere," who had only once been to see "Clare" in her own house—she came to congratulate after her fashion. Maria had only just time to run up into the drawing-room, one morning, and say,—

"Please, ma'am, the great carriage from the Towers is coming up to the gate, and my lady the Countess is sitting inside." It was but eleven o'clock, and Mrs. Gibson would have been indignant at any commoner who had ventured to call at such an untimely hour, but in the case of the Peerage the rules of domestic morality were relaxed.

The family "stood at arms," as it were, till Lady Cumnor appeared in the drawing-room; and then she had to be settled in the best chair, and the light adjusted before anything like conversation began. She was the first to speak; and Lady Harriet, who had begun a few words to Molly, dropped into silence.

"I have been taking Mary—Lady Cuxhaven—to the railway station on

this new line between Birmingham and London, and I thought I would come on here, and offer you my congratulations. Clare, which is the young lady?"—putting up her glasses, and looking at Cynthia and Molly, who were dressed pretty much alike. "I did not think it would be amiss to give you a little advice, my dear," said she, when Cynthia had been properly pointed out to her as bride elect. "I have heard a good deal about you; and I am only too glad, for your mother's sake,—your mother is a very worthy woman, and did her duty very well while she was in our family—I am truly rejoiced, I say, to hear that you are going to make so creditable a marriage. I hope it will efface your former errors of conduct—which, we will hope, were but trivial in reality—and that you will live to be a comfort to your mother,—for whom both Lord Cumnor and I entertain a very sincere regard. But you must conduct yourself with discretion in whatever state of life it pleases God to place you, whether married or single. You must reverence your husband, and conform to his opinion in all things. Look up to him as your head, and do nothing without consulting him."—It was as well that Lord Cumnor was not amongst the audience; or he might have compared precept with practice.—"Keep strict accounts; and remember your station in life. I understand that Mr. ——" looking about for some help as to the name she had forgotten—"Henderson—Henderson is in the law. Although there is a general prejudice against attorneys, I have known of two or three who are very respectable men; and I am sure Mr. Henderson is one, or your good mother and our old friend Gibson would not have sanctioned the engagement."

"He is a barrister," put in Cynthia, unable to restrain herself any longer. "Barrister-at-law."

"Ah, yes. Attorney-at-law. Barrister-at-law. I understand without your speaking so loud, my dear. What was I going to say before you interrupted me? When you have been a little in society you will find that it is reckoned bad manners to interrupt. I had a great deal more to say to you, and you have put it all out of my head. There was something else your father wanted me to ask—what was it, Harriet?"

"I suppose you mean about Mr. Hamley!"

"Oh, yes! we are intending to have the house full of Lord Hollingford's friends next month, and Lord Cumnor is particularly anxious to secure Mr. Hamley."

"The squire?" asked Mrs. Gibson in some surprise. Lady Cumnor bowed slightly, as much as to say, "If you did not interrupt me I should explain."

"The famous traveller—the scientific Mr. Hamley, I mean. I imagine he is son to the squire. Lord Hollingford knows him well; but when we asked him before, he declined coming, and assigned no reason."

Had Roger indeed been asked to the Towers and declined? Mrs. Gibson could not understand it. Lady Cumnor went on—

"Now this time we are particularly anxious to secure him, and my son

Lord Hollingsford will not return to England until the very week before the Duke of Atherstone is coming to us. I believe Mr. Gibson is very intimate with Mr. Hamley; do you think he could induce him to favour us with his company?"

And this from the proud Lady Cumnor; and the object of it Roger Hamley, whom she had all but turned out of her drawing-room two years ago for calling at an untimely hour; and whom Cynthia had turned out of her heart. Mrs. Gibson was surprised, and could only murmur out that she was sure Mr. Gibson would do all that her ladyship wished.

"Thank you. You know me well enough to be aware that I am not the person, nor is the Towers the house, to go about soliciting guests. But in this instance I bend my head; high rank should always be the first to honour those who have distinguished themselves by art or science."

"Besides, mamma," said Lady Harriet, "papa was saying that the Hamleys have been on their land since before the Conquest; while we only came into the country a century ago; and there is a tale that the first Cumnor began his fortune through selling tobacco in King James's reign."

If Lady Cumnor did not exactly shift her trumpet and take snuff there on the spot, she behaved in an equivalent manner. She began a low-toned but nevertheless authoritative conversation with Clare about the details of the wedding, which lasted until she thought it fit to go, when she abruptly plucked Lady Harriet up, and carried her off in the very midst of a description she was giving to Cynthia about the delights of Spa, which was to be one of the resting-places of the newly-married couple on their wedding-tour.

Nevertheless she prepared a handsome present for the bride: a Bible and a Prayer-book bound in velvet with silver-clasps; and also a collection of household account-books, at the beginning of which Lady Cumnor wrote down with her own hand the proper weekly allowance of bread, butter, eggs, meat, and groceries per head, with the London prices of the articles, so that the most inexperienced housekeeper might ascertain if her expenditure exceeded her means, as she expressed herself in the note which she sent with the handsome, dull present.

"If you are driving into Hollingsford, Harriet, perhaps you will take these books to Miss Kirkpatrick," said Lady Cumnor, after she had sealed her note with all the straitness and correctness befitting a countess of her immaculate character. "I understand they are all going up to London to-morrow for this wedding, in spite of what I said to Clare of the duty of being married in one's own parish-church. She told me at the time that she entirely agreed with me, but that her husband had such a strong wish for a visit to London, that she did not know how she could oppose him consistently with her wifely duty. I advised her to repeat to him my reasons for thinking that they would be ill-advised to have the marriage in town; but I am afraid she has been overruled. That was her one great fault when she lived with us; she was always so yielding, and never knew how to say 'No.'"

"Mamma!" said Lady Harriet, with a little sly coaxing in her tone. "Do you think you would have been so fond of her, if she had opposed you, and said 'No,' when you wished her to say 'Yes?'"

"To be sure I should, my dear. I like everybody to have an opinion of their own; only when my opinions are based on thought and experience, which few people have had equal opportunities of acquiring, I think it is but proper deference in others to allow themselves to be convinced. In fact, I think it is only obstinacy which keeps them from acknowledging that they are. I am not a despot, I hope?" she asked, with some anxiety.

"If you are, dear mamma," said Lady Harriet, kissing the stern uplifted face very fondly, "I like a despotism better than a republic, and I must be very despotie over my ponies, for it is already getting very late for my drive round by Ash-holt."

But when she arrived at the Gibsons', she was detained so long there by the state of the family, that she had to give up her going to Ash-holt.

Molly was sitting in the drawing-room pale and trembling, and keeping herself quiet only by a strong effort. She was the only person there when Lady Harriet entered; the room was all in disorder, strewed with presents and paper, and pasteboard boxes, and half-displayed articles of finery.

"You look like Marius sitting amidst the ruins of Carthage, my dear! What's the matter? Why have you got on that wobegone face? This marriage is not broken off, is it? Though nothing would surprise me where the beautiful Cynthia is concerned."

"Oh, no! that's all right. But I have caught a fresh cold, and papa says he thinks I had better not go to the wedding."

"Poor little one! And it's the first visit to London too!"

"Yes. But what I most care for is the not being with Cynthia to the last; and then, papa"—she stopped, for she could hardly go on without open crying, and she did not want to do that. Then she cleared her voice. "Papa!" she continued, "has so looked forward to this holiday,—and seeing—and—, and going—oh! I can't tell you where; but he has quite a list of people and sights to be seen,—and now he says he should not be comfortable to leave me all alone for more than three days,—two for travelling, and one for the wedding." Just then Mrs. Gibson came in, ruffled too after her fashion, though the presence of Lady Harriet was wonderfully smoothing.

"My dear Lady Harriet—how kind of you! Ah, yes, I see this poor unfortunate child has been telling you of her ill-luck; just when everything was going on so beautifully; I am sure it was that open window at your back, Molly,—you know you would persist that it could do you no harm, and now you see the mischief! I am sure I shan't be able to enjoy myself—and at my only child's wedding too—without you; for I can't think of leaving you without Maria. I would rather sacrifice anything myself than think of you, uncared for, and dismal at home."

"I am sure Molly is as sorry as any one," said Lady Harriet.

"No. I don't think she is," said Mrs. Gibson, with happy disregard of the chronology of events, "or she would not have sate with her back to an open window the day before yesterday, when I told her not. But it can't be helped now. Papa too—but it is my duty to make the best of everything, and look at the cheerful side of life. I wish I could persuade her to do the same" (turning and addressing Lady Harriet). "But you see it is a great mortification to a girl of her age to lose her first visit to London."

"It is not that," began Molly; but Lady Harriet made her a little sign to be silent while she herself spoke.

"Now, Clara! you and I can manage it all, I think, if you will but help me in a plan I have got in my head. Mr. Gibson shall stay as long as ever he can in London; and Molly shall be well cared for, and have some change of air and scene too, which is really what she needs as much as anything, in my poor opinion. I can't spirit her to the wedding and give her a sight of London; but I can carry her off to the Towers, and invite her myself; and send daily bulletins up to London, so that Mr. Gibson may feel quite at ease, and stay with you as long as you like. What do you say to it, Clara?"

"Oh, I could not go," said Molly; "I should only be a trouble to everybody."

"Nobody asked you for your opinion, little one. If we wise elders decide that you are to go, you must submit in silence."

Meanwhile Mrs. Gibson was rapidly balancing advantages and disadvantages. Amongst the latter, jealousy came in predominant. Amongst the former,—it would sound well; Maria could then accompany Cynthia and herself as "their maid,"—Mr. Gibson would stay longer with her, and it was always desirable to have a man at her beck and call in such a place as London; besides that, this identical man was gentlemanly and good-looking, and a favourite with her prosperous brother-in-law. The eyes had it.

"What a charming plan! I cannot think of anything kinder or pleasanter for this poor darling. Only—what will Lady Cumnor say? I am modest for my family as much as for myself," she continued.

"You know mamma's sense of hospitality is never more gratified than when the house is quite full; and papa is just like her. Besides she is fond of you, and grateful to our good Mr. Gibson, and will be fond of you, little one, when she knows you as I do."

Molly's heart sank within her at the prospect. Excepting on the one evening of her father's wedding-day, she had never even seen the outside of the Towers since that unlucky day in her childhood when she had fallen asleep on Clara's bed. She had a dread of the countess, a dislike to her house, only it seemed as if it was a solution to the problem of what to do with her, which had been perplexing every one all morning, and so evidently that it had caused her much distress. She kept silence, though

her lips quivered from time to time. Oh, if Miss Brownings had not chosen this very time of all others to pay their monthly visit to Miss Hornblower ! if she could only have gone there, and lived with them in their quaint, quiet, primitive way, instead of having to listen, without remonstrance, to hearing plans discussed about her, as if she was an inanimate chattel.

"She shall have the south pink room, opening out of mine by one door, you remember ; and the dressing-room shall be made into a cozy little sitting-room for her, in case she likes to be by herself. Parkes shall attend upon her, and I am sure Mr. Gibson must know Parkes's powers as a nurse by this time. We shall have all manner of agreeable people in the house to amuse her downstairs ; and when she has got rid of this access of cold, I will drive her out every day, and write daily bulletins, as I said. Pray tell Mr. Gibson all that, and let it be considered as settled. I will come for her in the close carriage to-morrow, at eleven. And now may I see the lovely bride elect, and give her mamma's present, and my own good wishes ?"

So Cynthia came in, and demurely received the very proper present, and the equally coveted congratulations, without testifying any very great delight or gratitude at either ; for she was quite quick enough to detect there was no great afflux of affection accompanying either. But when she heard her mother quickly recapitulating all the details of the plan for Molly, Cynthia's eyes did sparkle with gladness ; and almost to Lady Harriet's surprise, she thanked her as if she had conferred a personal favour upon her, Cynthia. Lady Harriet saw, too, that in a very quiet way, she had taken Molly's hand, and was holding it all the time, as if loth to think of their approaching separation—somehow, she and Lady Harriet were brought nearer together by this little action than they had ever been before.

Molly had hoped that her father might have raised some obstacles to the project : she was disappointed. But, indeed, she did not when she perceived how he seemed to feel that, by placing her under the care of Lady Harriet and Parkes, he should be relieved from anxiety ; and now he spoke of this change of air and scene as being the very thing he had been wishing to secure for her : country air, and absence of excitement as this would be ; for the only other place where he could have secured her these advantages, and at the same time sent her as an invalid, was to Hamley Hall ; and he dreaded the associations there with the beginning of her present illness.

So Molly was driven off in state the next day, leaving her own home all in confusion with the assemblage of boxes and trunks in the hall, and all the other symptoms of the approaching departure of the family for London and the wedding. All the morning Cynthia had been with her in her room, attending to the arrangement of Molly's clothes, instructing her what to wear with what, and rejoicing over the pretty smartnesses, which, having been prepared for her as bridesmaid, were now to serve as adornments for her visit to the Towers. Both Molly and Cynthia spoke

about dress as if it was the very object of their lives ; for each dreaded the introduction of more serious subjects ; Cynthia more for Molly than herself. Only when the carriage was announced, and Molly was preparing to go downstairs, Cynthia said,—

"I am not going to thank you, Molly, or to tell you how I love you."

"Don't," said Molly, "I can't bear it."

"Only you know you're to be my first visitor, and if you wear brown ribbons to a green gown, I'll turn you out of the house !" So they parted. Mr. Gibson was there in the hall to hand Molly in. He had ridden hard ; and was now giving her two or three last injunctions as to her health.

"Think of us on Thursday," said he. "I declare I don't know which of her three lovers she may not summon at the very last moment to act the part of bridegroom. I'm determined to be surprised at nothing ; and will give her away with a good grace to whoever comes."

They drove away, and until they were out of sight of the house, Molly had enough to do to keep returning the kisses of the hand wafted to her by her stepmother out of the drawing-room window, while at the same time her eyes were fixed on a white handkerchief fluttering out of the attic from which she herself had watched Roger's departure nearly two years before. What changes time had brought !

When Molly arrived at the Towers she was convoyed into Lady Cumnor's presence by Lady Harriet. It was a mark of respect to the lady of the house, which the latter knew that her mother would expect ; but she was anxious to get it over, and take Molly up into the room which she had been so busy in arranging for her. Lady Cumnor was, however, very kind, if not positively gracious.

"You are Lady Harriet's visitor, my dear," said she, "and I hope she will take good care of you. If not, come and complain of her to me." It was as near an approach to a joke as Lady Cumnor ever perpetrated, and from it Lady Harriet knew that her mother was pleased by Molly's manners and appearance.

"Now, here you are in your own kingdom ; and into this room I shan't venture to come without express permission. Here is the last new Quarterly, and the last new novel, and the last new essay. Now, my dear, you need not come down again to-day unless you like it. Parkes shall bring you everything and anything you want. You must get strong as fast as you can, for all sorts of great and famous people are coming to-morrow and the next day, and I think you'll like to see them. Suppose for to-day you only come down to lunch, and if you like it, in the evening. Dinner is such a wearily long meal, if one is not strong ; and you would not miss much, for there is only my cousin Charles in the house now, and he is the personification of sensible silence."

Molly was only too glad to allow Lady Harriet to decide everything for her. It had begun to rain, and was, altogether, a gloomy day for August ; and there was a small fire of scented wood burning cheerfully in

the sitting-room appropriated to her. High up, it commanded a wide and pleasant view over the park, and from it could be seen the spire of Hellingford Church, which gave Molly a pleasant idea of neighbourhood to home. She was left alone, lying on the sofa—books near her, wood crackling and blazing, wafts of wind bringing the beating rain against the window, and so enhancing the sense of indoor comfort by the outdoor contrast. Parkes was unpacking for her. Lady Harriet had introduced Parkes to Molly by saying, "Now, Molly, this is Mrs. Parkes, the only person I ever am afraid of. She scolds me if I dirty myself with my paints, just as if I was a little child; and she makes me go to bed when I want to sit up,"—Parkes was smiling grimly all the time;—"so to get rid of her tyranny I give her you as victim. Parkes, rule over Miss Gibson with a rod of iron; make her eat and drink, and rest and sleep, and dress as you think wisest and best."

Parkes had begun her reign by putting Molly on the sofa, and saying, "If you will give me your keys, Miss, I will unpack your things, and let you know when it is time for me to arrange your hair, preparatory to luncheon." For if Lady Harriet used familiar colloquialisms from time to time, she certainly had not learnt it from Parkes, who piqued herself on the correctness of her language.

When Molly went down to lunch she found "cousin Charles," with his aunt, Lady Cumnor. He was a certain Sir Charles Morton, the son of Lady Cumnor's only sister: a plain, sandy-haired man of thirty-five or so; immensely rich, very sensible, awkward, and reserved. He had had a chronic attachment, of many years' standing, to his cousin, Lady Harriet, who did not care for him in the least, although it was the marriage very earnestly desired for her by her mother. Lady Harriet was, however, on friendly terms with him, ordered him about, and told him what to do, and what to leave undone, without having even a doubt as to the willingness of his obedience. She had given him his cue about Molly.

"Now, Charles, the girl wants to be interested and amused without having to take any trouble for herself; she is too delicate to be very active either in mind or body. Just look after her when the house gets full, and place her where she can hear and see everything and everybody, without any fuss and responsibility."

So Sir Charles began this day at luncheon by taking Molly under his quiet protection. He did not say much to her; but what he did say was thoroughly friendly and sympathetic; and Molly began, as he and Lady Harriet intended that she should, to have a kind of pleasant reliance upon him. Then in the evening while the rest of the family were at dinner—after Molly's tea and hour of quiet repose, Parkes came and dressed her in some of the new clothes prepared for the Kirkpatrick visit, and did her hair in some new and pretty way, so that when Molly looked at herself in the cheval-glass, she scarcely knew the elegant reflection to be that of herself. She was fetched down by Lady Harriet into the great long formidable drawing-room, which, as an interminable place of pacing, had haunted her

dreams ever since her childhood. At the further end sat Lady Cumnor at her tapestry work ; the light of fire and candle seemed all concentrated on that one bright part where presently Lady Harriet made tea, and Lord Cumnor went to sleep, and Sir Charles read passages aloud from the *Edinburgh Review* to the three ladies at their work.

When Molly went to bed she was constrained to admit that staying at the Towers as a visitor was rather pleasant than otherwise ; and she tried to reconcile old impressions with new ones, until she fell asleep. There was another comparatively quiet day before the expected guests began to arrive in the evening. Lady Harriet took Molly a drive in her little pony-carriage ; and for the first time for many weeks Molly began to feel the delightful spring of returning health ; the dance of youthful spirits in the fresh air cleared by the previous day's rain.

CHAPTER LVIII.

REVIVING HOPES AND BRIGHTENING PROSPECTS.

"If you can without fatigue, dear, do come down to dinner to-day ; you'll then see the people one by one as they appear, instead of having to encounter a crowd of strangers. Hollingford will be here too. I hope you'll find it pleasant."

So Molly made her appearance at dinner that day ; and got to know, by sight at least, some of the most distinguished of the visitors at the Towers. The next day was Thursday, Cynthia's wedding-day ; bright and fine in the country, whatever it might be in London. And there were several letters from the home-people awaiting Molly when she came downstairs to the late breakfast. For every day, every hour, she was gaining strength and health, and she was unwilling to continue her invalid habits any longer than was necessary. She looked so much better that Sir Charles noticed it to Lady Harriet ; and several of the visitors spoke of her this morning as a very pretty, lady-like, and graceful girl. This was Thursday ; on Friday, as Lady Harriet had told her, some visitors from the more immediate neighbourhood were expected to stay over the Sunday : but she had not mentioned their names, and when Molly went down into the drawing-room before dinner, she was almost startled by perceiving Roger Hamley in the centre of a group of gentlemen, who were all talking together eagerly, and, as it seemed to her, making him the object of their attention. He made a hitch in his conversation, lost the precise meaning of a question addressed to him, answered it rather hastily, and made his way to where Molly was sitting, a little behind Lady Harriet. He had heard that she was staying at the Towers, but he was almost as much surprised as she was by his unexpected appearance, for he had only seen her once or twice since his return from Africa, and then in the guise of an invalid. Now in her pretty evening dress, with her hair beautifully

dressed, her delicate complexion flushed a little with timidity, yet her movements and manners bespeaking quiet ease, Roger hardly recognized her, although he acknowledged her identity. He began to feel that admiring deference which most young men experience when conversing with a very pretty girl: a sort of desire to obtain her good opinion in a manner very different to his old familiar friendliness. He was annoyed when Sir Charles, whose especial charge she still was, came up to take her in to dinner. He could not quite understand the smile of mutual intelligence that passed between the two, each being aware of Lady Harriet's plan of sheltering Molly from the necessity of talking, and acting in conformity with her wishes as much as with their own. Roger found himself puzzling, and watching them from time to time during dinner. Again in the evening he sought her out, but found her again pre-occupied with one of the young men staying in the house, who had had the advantage of two days of mutual interest, and acquaintance with the daily events and jokes and anxieties of the family-circle. Molly could not help wishing to break off all this trivial talk and to make room for Roger: she had so much to ask him about everything at the Hall; he was, and had been such a stranger to them all for these last two months, and more. But though each wanted to speak to the other more than to any one else in the room, it so happened that everything seemed to conspire to prevent it. Lord Hollingford carried off Roger to the clatter of middle-aged men; he was wanted to give his opinion upon some scientific subject. Mr. Ernest Watson, the young man referred to above, kept his place by Molly, as the prettiest girl in the room, and almost dazed her by his never-ceasing flow of clever small-talk. She looked so tired and pale at last that the ever-watchful Lady Harriet sent Sir Charles to the rescue, and after a few words with Lady Harriet, Roger saw Molly quietly leave the room; and a sentence or two which he heard Lady Harriet address to her cousin made him know that it was for the night. Those sentences might bear another interpretation to the obvious one.

"Really, Charles, considering that she is in your charge, I think you might have saved her from the chatter and patter of Mr. Watson; I can only stand it when I am in the strongest health."

Why was Molly in Sir Charles' charge? why? Then Roger remembered many little things that might serve to confirm the fancy he had got into his head; and he went to bed puzzled and annoyed. It seemed to him such an incongruous, hastily-got-up sort of engagement, if engagement it really was. On Saturday they were more fortunate; they had a long *tête-à-tête* in the most public place in the house—on a sofa in the hall where Molly was resting at Lady Harriet's command before going upstairs after a walk. Roger was passing through, and saw her, and came to her. Standing before her, and making pretence of playing with the gold-fish in a great marble basin close at hand,—

"I was very unlucky," said he. "I wanted to get near you last night, but it was quite impossible. You were so busy talking to Mr. Watson,

until Sir Charles Morton came and carried you off—with such an air of authority! Have you known him long?"

Now this was not at all the manner in which Roger had pre-determined that he would speak of Sir Charles to Molly; but the words came out in spite of himself.

"No! not long. I never saw him before I came here—on Tuesday. But Lady Harriet told him to see that I did not get tired, for I wanted to come down; but you know I have not been strong. He is a cousin of Lady Harriet's, and does all she tells him to do."

"Oh! he is not handsome; but I believe he is a very sensible man."

"Yes! I should think so. He is so silent though, that I can hardly judge."

"He bears a very high character in the county," said Roger, willing now to give him his full due.

Molly stood up.

"I must go upstairs," she said; "I only sate down here for a minute or two because Lady Harriet bade me."

"Stop a little longer," said he. "This is really the pleasantest place; this basin of water-lilies gives one the idea, if not the sensation, of coolness; besides—it seems so long since I saw you, and I have a message from my father to give you. He is very angry with you."

"Angry with me?" said Molly, in surprise.

"Yes! He heard that you had come here for change of air; and he was offended that you had not come to us—to the Hall, instead. He said that you should have remembered old friends!"

Molly took all this quite gravely, and did not at first notice the smile on his face.

"Oh! I am so sorry!" said she. "But will you please tell him how it all happened. Lady Harriet called the very day when it was settled that I was not to go to——" Cynthia's wedding she was going to add, but she suddenly stopped short, and, blushing deeply, changed the expression, "go to London, and she planned it all in a minute, and convinced mamma and papa, and had her own way. There was really no resisting her."

"I think you will have to tell all this to my father yourself, if you mean to make your peace. Why can you not come on to the Hall when you leave the Towers?"

To go in the cool manner suggested from one house to another, after the manner of a royal progress, was not at all according to Molly's primitive home-keeping notions. She made answer,—

"I should like it very much, some time. But I must go home first. They will want me more than ever now——"

Again she felt herself touching on a sore subject, and stopped short. Roger became annoyed at her so constantly conjecturing what he must be feeling on the subject of Cynthia's marriage. With sympathetic perception she had discerned that the idea must give him pain; and perhaps she also knew that he would dislike to show the pain: but she had not

the presence of mind or ready wit to give a skilful turn to the conversation. All this annoyed Roger, he could hardly tell why. He determined to take the metaphorical bull by the horns. Until that was done, his footing with Molly would always be insecure; as it always is between two friends, who mutually avoid a subject to which their thoughts perpetually recur.

"Ah, yes!" said he. "Of course you must be of double importance now Miss Kirkpatrick has left you. I saw her marriage in *The Times* yesterday."

His tone of voice was changed in speaking of her, but her name had been named between them, and that was the great thing to accomplish.

"Still," he continued, "I think I must urge my father's claim for a short visit, and all the more, because I can really see the apparent improvement in your health since I came,—only yesterday. Besides, Molly," it was the old familiar Roger of former days who spoke now, "I think you could help us at home. Aimée is shy and awkward with my father, and he has never taken quite kindly to her,—yet I know they would like and value each other, if some one could but bring them together,—and it would be such a comfort to me if this could take place before I have to leave."

"To leave—are you going away again?"

"Yes. Have you not heard? I did not complete my engagement. I am going again in September for six months."

"I remember. But somehow I fancied—you seemed to have settled down into the old way at the Hall."

"So my father appears to think. But it is not likely I shall ever make it my home again; and that is partly the reason why I want my father to adopt the notion of Aimée's living with him. Ah, here are all the people coming back from their walk. However, I shall see you again: perhaps this afternoon we may get a little quiet time, for I have a great deal to consult you about."

They separated then, and Molly went upstairs very happy, very full and warm at her heart; it was so pleasant to have Roger talking to her in this way, like a friend; she had once thought that she could never look upon the great brown-bearded celebrity in the former light of almost brotherly intimacy, but now it was all coming right. There was no opportunity for renewed confidences that afternoon. Molly went a quiet decorous drive as fourth with two dowagers and one spinster; but it was very pleasant to think that she should see him again at dinner, and again to-morrow. On the Sunday evening, as they all were sitting and loitering on the lawn before dinner, Roger went on with what he had to say about the position of his sister-in-law in his father's house: the mutual bond between the mother and grandfather being the child; who was also, through jealousy, the bone of contention and the severance. There were many little details to be given in order to make Molly quite understand the difficulty of the situations on both sides; and the young man and the

girl became absorbed in what they were talking about, and wandered away into the shade of the long avenue. Lady Harriet separated herself from a group and came up to Lord Hollingford, who was sauntering a little apart, and putting her arm within his with the familiarity of a favourite sister, she said,—

"Don't you think that your pattern young man, and my favourite young woman, are finding out each other's good qualities?"

He had not been observing as she had been.

"Who do you mean?" said he.

"Look along the avenue; who are those?"

"Mr. Hamley and—is it not Miss Gibson? I can't quite make out. Oh! if you're letting your fancy run off in that direction, I can tell you it's quite waste of time. Roger Hamley is a man who will soon have an European reputation!"

"That's very possible, and yet it does not make any difference in my opinion. Molly Gibson is capable of appreciating him."

"She is a very pretty, good little country-girl. I don't mean to say anything against her, but——"

"Remember the Charity Ball; you called her 'unusually intelligent' after you had danced with her there. But after all we are like the genie and the fairy in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, who each cried up the merits of the Prince Caramalzaman and the Princess Badoura."

"Hamley is not a marrying man."

"How do you know?"

"I know that he has very little private fortune, and I know that science is not a remunerative profession, if profession it can be called."

"Oh, if that's all—a hundred things may happen—some one may leave him a fortune—or this tiresome little heir that nobody wanted, may die."

"Hush, Harriet, that's the worst of allowing yourself to plan far ahead for the future; you are sure to contemplate the death of some one, and to reckon upon the contingency as affecting events."

"As if lawyers were not always doing something of the kind!"

"Leave it to those to whom it is necessary. I dislike planning marriages or looking forward to deaths about equally."

"You are getting very prosaic and tiresome, Hollingford!"

"Only getting!" said he smiling. "I thought you had always looked upon me as a tiresome matter-of-fact fellow."

"Now, if you're going to fish for a compliment, I am gone. Only remember my prophecy when my vision comes to pass; or make a bet, and whoever wins shall spend the money on a present to Prince Caramalzaman or Princess Badoura, as the case may be."

Lord Hollingford remembered his sister's words as he heard Roger say to Molly as he was leaving the Towers on the following day,—

"Then I may tell my father that you will come and pay him a visit next week? You don't know what pleasure it will give him." He had

been on the point of saying "will give us," but he had an instinct which told him it was as well to consider Molly's promised visit as exclusively made to his father.

The next day Molly went home; she was astonished at herself for being so sorry to leave the Towers; and found it difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile the long-fixed idea of the house as a place wherein to suffer all a child's tortures of dismay and forlornness with her new and fresh conception. She had gained health, she had had pleasure, the faint fragrance of a new and unacknowledged hope had stolen into her life. No wonder that Mr. Gibson was struck with the improvement in her looks, and Mrs. Gibson impressed with her increased grace.

"Ah, Molly," said she, "it's really wonderful to see what a little good society will do for a girl. Even a week of association with such people as one meets with at the Towers is, as somebody said of a lady of rank whose name I have forgotten, 'a polite education in itself.' There is something quite different about you—a *je ne sais quoi*—that would tell me at once that you have been mingling with the aristocracy. With all her charms, it was what my darling Cynthia wanted; not that Mr. Henderson thought so, for a more devoted lover can hardly be conceived. He absolutely bought her a parure of diamonds. I was obliged to say to him that I had studied to preserve her simplicity of taste, and that he must not corrupt her with too much luxury. But I was rather disappointed at their going off without a maid. It was the one blemish in the arrangements, the spot in the sun. Dear Cynthia, when I think of her, I do assure you, Molly, I make it my nightly prayer that I may be able to find you just such another husband. And all this time you have never told me who you met at the Towers?"

Molly ran over a list of names. Roger Hamley's came last.

"Upon my word! That young man is pushing his way up!"

"The Hamleys are a far older family than the Cumnors," said Molly, flushing up.

"Now, Molly, I can't have you democratic. Rank is a great distinction. It is quite enough to have dear papa with democratic tendencies. But we won't begin to quarrel. Now that you and I are left alone we ought to be bosom friends, and I hope we shall be. Roger Hamley did not say much about that unfortunate little Osborne Hamley, I suppose."

"On the contrary. He says his father dotes on the child; and he seemed very proud of him, himself."

"I thought the squire must be getting very much infatuated with something. I daresay the French mother takes care of that. Why! he has scarcely taken any notice of you for this month or more, and before that you were everything."

It was about six weeks since Cynthia's engagement had become publicly known, and that might have had something to do with the squire's desertion, Molly thought. But she said,—

"The squire has sent me an invitation to go and stay there next week

if you have no objection, mamma. They seem to want a companion for Mrs. Osborne Hamley, who is not very strong."

"I can hardly tell what to say,—I don't like your having to associate with a Frenchwoman of doubtful rank; and I can't bear the thought of losing my child—my only daughter now. I did ask Helen Kirkpatrick, but she can't come for some time; and the house is going to be altered. Papa has consented to build me another room at last, for Cynthia and Mr. Henderson will, of course, come and see us; we shall have many more visitors, I expect, and your bedroom will make a capital lumber-room; and Maria wants a week's holiday. I am always so unwilling to put any obstacles in the way of any one's pleasure,—weakly unwilling, I believe,—but it certainly would be very convenient to have you out of the house for a few days; so, for once, I will waive my own wish for your companionship, and plead your cause with papa."

Miss Brownings came to call and hear the double batch of news. Mrs. Goodenough had come the very day on which they had returned from Miss Hornblower's, to tell them the astounding fact of Molly Gibson having gone on a visit to the Towers; not to come back at night, but to sleep there, to be there for two or three days, just as if she was a young lady of quality. So Miss Browning came to hear all the details of the wedding from Mrs. Gibson, and the history of Molly's visit at the Towers as well. But Mrs. Gibson did not like this divided interest, and some of her old jealousy of Molly's intimacy at the Towers had returned.

"Now, Molly," said Miss Browning, "let us hear how you behaved among the great folks. You must not be set up with all their attention; remember that they pay it to you for your good father's sake."

"Molly is, I think, quite aware," put in Mrs. Gibson, in her most soft and languid tone, "that she owes her privilege of visiting at such a house to Lady Cumnor's kind desire to set my mind quite at liberty at the time of Cynthia's marriage. As soon as ever I had returned home, Molly came back; indeed I should not have thought it right to let her intrude upon their kindness beyond what was absolutely necessary."

Molly felt extremely uncomfortable at all this, although perfectly aware of the entire inaccuracy of the statement.

"Well, but, Molly!" said Miss Browning, "never mind whether you went there on your own merits, or your worthy father's merits, or Mrs. Gibson's merits; but tell us what you did when you were there."

So Molly began an account of their sayings and doings, which she could have made far more interesting to Miss Browning and Miss Phœbe if she had not been conscious of her stepmother's critical listening. She had to tell it all with a mental squint; the surest way to spoil a narration. She was also subject to Mrs. Gibson's perpetual corrections of little statements which she knew to be facts. But what vexed her most of all was Mrs. Gibson's last speech before the Miss Brownings left.

"Molly has fallen into rambling ways with this visit of hers, of which she makes so much, as if nobody had ever been in a great house but

herself. She is going to Hamley Hall next week,—getting quite dissipated in fact."

Yet to Mrs. Goodenough, the next caller on the same errand of congratulation, Mrs. Gibson's tone was quite different. There had always been a tacit antagonism between the two, and the conversation now ran as follows :—

Mrs. Goodenough began,

"Well! Mrs. Gibson, I suppose I must wish you joy of Miss Cynthia's marriage; I should condole with some mothers as had lost their daughters; but you're not one of that sort, I reckon."

Now, as Mrs. Gibson was not quite sure to which "sort" of mothers the greatest credit was to be attached, she found it a little difficult how to frame her reply.

"Dear Cynthia!" she said. "One can't but rejoice in her happiness! And yet——" she ended her sentence by sighing.

"Ay. She was a young woman as would always have her followers; for, to tell the truth, she was as pretty a creature as ever I saw in my life. And all the more she needed skilful guidance. I am sure I, for one, am as glad as can be she's done so well by herself. Folks say Mr. Henderson has a handsome private fortune over and above what he makes by the law."

"There is no fear but that my Cynthia will have everything this world can give!" said Mrs. Gibson with dignity.

"Well, well! she was always a bit of a favourite of mine; and as I was saying to my granddaughter there" (for she was accompanied by a young lady, who looked keenly to the prospect of some wedding-cake), "I was never one of those who ran her down and called her a flirt and a jilt. I'm glad to hear she's like to be so well off. And now, I suppose, you'll be turning your mind to doing something for Miss Molly there?"

"If you mean by that, doing anything that can, by hastening her marriage, deprive me of the company of one who is like my own child, you are very much mistaken, Mrs. Goodenough. And pray remember, I am the last person in the world to match-make. Cynthia made Mr. Henderson's acquaintance at her uncle's in London."

"Ay! I thought her cousin was very often ill, and needing her nursing, and you were very keen she should be of use. I am not saying but what it is right in a mother; I'm only putting in a word for Miss Molly."

"Thank you, Mrs. Goodenough," said Molly, half-angry, half-laughing. "When I want to be married, I'll not trouble mamma. I'll look out for myself."

"Molly is becoming so popular, I hardly know how we shall keep her at home," said Mrs. Gibson. "I miss her sadly; but, as I said to Mr. Gibson, let young people have change, and see a little of the world while they are young. It has been a great advantage to her being at the Towers while so many clever and distinguished people were there. I can already see a difference in her tone of conversation: an elevation in

her choice of subjects. And now she is going to Hamley Hall. I can assure you I feel quite a proud mother, when I see how she is sought after. And my other daughter—my Cynthia—writing such letters from Paris!"

"Things is a deal changed since my days, for sure," said Mrs. Goodenough. "So, perhaps, I'm no judge. When I was married first, him and me went in a postchaise to his father's house, a matter of twenty mile off at the outside; and sate down to as good a supper amongst his friends and relations as you'd wish to see. And that was my first wedding jaunt. My second was when I better knowed my worth as a bride, and thought that now or never I must see London. But I were reckoned a very extravagant sort of a body to go so far, and spend my money, though Jerry had left me uncommon well off. But now young folks go off to Paris, and think nothing of the cost: and it's well if wilful waste don't make woeful want before they die. But I'm thankful somewhat is being done for Miss Molly's chances, as I said afore. It's not quite what I should have liked to have done for my Anna-Maria though. But times are changed, as I said just now."

CHAPTER LIX.

MOLLY GIBSON AT HAMLEY HALL.

THE conversation ended there for the time. Wedding-cake and wine were brought in, and it was Molly's duty to serve them out. But those last words of Mrs. Goodenough's tingled in her ears, and she tried to interpret them to her own satisfaction in any way but the obvious one. And that, too, was destined to be confirmed; for directly after Mrs. Goodenough took her leave, Mrs. Gibson desired Molly to carry away the tray to a table close to an open corner window, where the things might be placed in readiness for any future callers; and underneath this open window went the path from the house-door to the road. Molly heard Mrs. Goodenough saying to her granddaughter,—

"That Mrs. Gibson is a deep un. There's Mr. Roger Hamley as like as not to have the Hall estate, and she sends Molly a-visiting—" and then she passed out of hearing. Molly could have burst out crying, with a full sudden conviction of what Mrs. Goodenough had been alluding to: her sense of the impropriety of Molly's going to visit at the Hall when Roger was at home. To be sure Mrs. Goodenough was a commonplace, unrefined woman. Mrs. Gibson did not seem to have even noticed the allusion. Mr. Gibson took it all as a matter of course that Molly should go to the Hall as simply now, as she had done before. Roger had spoken of it in so straightforward a manner as showed he had no conception of its being an impropriety,—this visit,—this visit until now so happy a subject of anticipation. Molly felt as if she could never speak to any one

of the idea to which Mrs. Goodenough's words had given rise; as if she could never be the first to suggest the notion of impropriety, which presupposed what she blushed to think of. Then she tried to comfort herself by reasoning. If it had been wrong, forward, or indelicate, really improper in the slightest degree, who would have been so ready as her father to put his veto upon it? But reasoning was of no use after Mrs. Goodenough's words had put fancies into Molly's head. The more she bade these fancies begone the more they answered her (as Daniel O'Rourke did the man in the moon, when he bade Dan get off his seat on the sickle, and go into empty space), "The more ye ask us the more we won't stir." One may smile at a young girl's miseries of this description; but they are very real and stinging miseries to her. All that Molly could do was to resolve on a single eye to the dear old squire, and his mental and bodily comforts; to try and heal up any breaches which might have occurred between him and Aimée; and to ignore Roger as much as possible. Good Roger! Kind Roger! Dear Roger! It would be very hard to avoid him as much as was consistent with common politeness; but it would be right to do it; and when she was with him she must be as natural as possible, or he might observe some difference; but what was natural? How much ought she avoid being with him? Would he even notice if she was more chary of her company, more calculating of her words? Alas! the simplicity of their intercourse was spoilt hence-forwards! She made laws for herself; she resolved to devote herself to the squire and to Aimée, and to forget Mrs. Goodenough's foolish speeches; but her perfect freedom was gone; and with it half her chance, that is to say, half her chance would have been lost over any strangers who had not known her before: they would probably have thought her stiff and awkward, and apt to say things and then retract them. But she was so different from her usual self that Roger noticed the change in her as soon as she arrived at the Hall. She had carefully measured out the days of her visit; they were to be exactly the same number as she had spent at the Towers. She feared lest if she stayed at the Hall a shorter time the squire might be annoyed. Yet how charming the place looked in its early autumnal glow as she drove up! And there was Roger at the hall-door waiting to receive her, watching for her coming. And now he retreated, apparently to summon his sister-in-law, who came now timidly forward in her deep widow's mourning, holding her boy in her arms as if to protect her shyness; but he struggled down, and ran towards the carriage, eager to greet his friend the coachman, and to obtain a promised ride. Roger did not say much himself: he wanted to make Aimée feel her place as daughter of the house; but she was too timid to speak much. And she only took Molly by the hand and led her into the drawing-room, where, as if by a sudden impulse of gratitude for all the tender nursing she had received during her illness, she put her arms round Molly and kissed her long and well. And after that they came to be friends.

It was nearly lunch-time, and the squire always made his appearance at that meal, more for the pleasure of seeing his grandson eat his dinner, than for any hunger of his own. To-day Molly quickly saw the whole state of the family affairs. She thought that even had Roger said nothing about them at the Towers, she should have found out that neither the father nor the daughter-in-law had as yet found the clue to each other's characters, although they had now been living for several months in the same house. Aimée seemed to forget her English in her nervousness; and to watch with the jealous eyes of a dissatisfied mother all the proceedings of the squire towards her little boy. They were not of the wisest kind it must be owned; the child sipped the strong ale with evident relish, and clamoured for everything which he saw the others enjoying. Aimée could hardly attend to Molly for her anxiety as to what her boy was doing and eating; yet she said nothing. Roger took the end of the table opposite to that at which sate grandfather and grandchild. After the boy's first wants were gratified the squire addressed himself to Molly.

"Well! and so you can come here a-visiting though you have been among the grand folks. I thought you were going to cut us, Miss Molly, when I heard you was gone to the Towers—could not find any other place to stay at while father and mother were away, but an earl's, eh?"

"They asked me, and I went," said Molly; "now you've asked me, and I've come here."

"I think you might ha' known you'd be always welcome here, without waiting for asking. Why, Molly! I look upon you as a kind of a daughter more than Madam there!" dropping his voice a little, and perhaps supposing that the child's babble would drown the signification of his words.

"Nay, you need not look at me so pitifully—she does not follow English readily."

"I think she does!" said Molly, in a low voice, not looking up, however, for fear of catching another glimpse at Aimée's sudden forlornness of expression and deepened colour. She felt grateful, as if for a personal favour, when she heard Roger speaking to Aimée the moment afterwards in the tender terms of brotherly friendliness; and presently these two were sufficiently engaged in a tête-à-tête conversation to allow Molly and the squire to go on talking.

"He's a sturdy chap, is not he?" said the squire, stroking the little Roger's curly head. "And he can puff four puffs at grandpapa's pipe without being sick, can't he?"

"I s'ant puff any more puffs," said the boy, resolutely. "Mamma says no. I s'ant."

"That's just like her!" said the squire, dropping his voice this time however. "As if it could do the child any harm!"

Molly made a point of turning the conversation from all personal subjects after this, and kept the squire talking about the progress of his drainage during the rest of lunch. He offered to take her to see it; and

she acceded to the proposal, thinking, meantime, how little she need have anticipated the being thrown too intimately with Roger, who seemed to devote himself to his sister-in-law. But, in the evening, when Aimée had gone upstairs to put her boy to bed, and the squire was asleep in his easy chair, a sudden flush of memory brought Mrs. Goodenough's words again to her mind. She was virtually tête-à-tête with Roger, as she had been dozens of times before, but now she could not help assuming an air of constraint: her eyes did not meet his in the old frank way; she took up a book at a pause in the conversation, and left him puzzled and annoyed at the change in her manner. And so it went on during all the time of her visit. If sometimes she forgot and let herself go into all her old naturalness, by-and-by she checked herself, and became comparatively cold and reserved. Roger was pained at all this—more pained day after day; more anxious to discover the cause. Aimée, too, silently noticed how different Molly became in Roger's presence. One day she could not help saying to Molly,—

"Don't you like Roger? You would if you only knew how good he was! He is learned, but that is nothing: it is his goodness that one admires and loves."

"He is very good," said Molly. "I have known him long enough to know that."

"But you don't think him agreeable? He is not like my poor husband, to be sure; and you knew him well, too. Ah! tell me about him once again. When you first knew him? When his mother was alive?"

Molly had grown very fond of Aimée: when the latter was at her ease she had very charming and attaching ways; but feeling uneasy in her position in the squire's house, she was almost repellent to him; and he, too, put on his worst side to her. Roger was most anxious to bring them together, and had several consultations with Molly as to the best means of accomplishing this end. As long as they talked upon this subject she spoke to him in the quiet sensible manner which she inherited from her father; but when their discussions on this point were ended, she fell back into her piquant assumption of dignified reserve. It was very difficult to her to maintain this strange manner, especially when once or twice she fancied that it gave him pain; and she would go into her own room and suddenly burst into tears on these occasions, and wish that her visit was ended, and that she was once again in the eventless tranquillity of her own home. Yet presently her fancy changed, and she clung to the swiftly passing hours, as if she would still retain the happiness of each. For, unknown to her, Roger was exerting himself to make her visit pleasant. He was not willing to appear as the instigator of all the little plans for each day, for he felt as if somehow he did not hold the same place in her regard as formerly. Still, one day Aimée suggested a nutting expedition—another day they gave little Roger the unheard-of pleasure of tea out-of-doors—there was something else agreeable for a third; and it was

Roger who arranged all these simple pleasures—such as he knew Molly would enjoy. But to her he only appeared as the ready forwarder of Aimée's devices. The week was nearly gone, when one morning the squire found Roger sitting in the old library—with a book before him, it is true, but so deep in thought that he was evidently startled by his father's unexpected entrance.

"I thought I should find thee here, my lad! We'll have the old room done up again before winter; it smells musty enough, and yet I see it's the place for thee! I want thee to go with me round the five-acre. I'm thinking of laying it down in grass. It's time for you to be getting into the fresh air, you look quite wobegone over books, books, books; there never was a thing like 'em for stealing a man's health out of him!"

So Roger went out with his father, without saying many words till they were at some distance from the house. Then he brought out a sentence with such abruptness that he repaid his father for the start the latter had given him a quarter of an hour before.

"Father, you remember I'm going out again to the Cape next month! You spoke of doing up the library. If it is for me, I shall be away all the winter."

"Can't you get off it?" pleaded his father. "I thought maybe you'd forgotten all about it."

"Not likely!" said Roger, half-smiling.

"Well, but they might have found another man to finish up your work."

"No one can finish it but myself. Besides, an engagement is an engagement. When I wrote to Lord Hollingford to tell him I must come home, I promised to go out again for another six months."

"Ay. I know. And perhaps it will put it out of my mind. It will always be hard on me to part from thee. But I daresay it's best for you."

Roger's colour deepened. "You are alluding to—to Miss Kirkpatrick—Mrs. Henderson I mean. Father, let me tell you once for all I think that was rather a hasty affair. I am pretty sure now that we were not suited to each other. I was wretched when I got her letter—at the Cape I mean—but I believe it was for the best."

"That's right. That's my own boy," said the squire, turning round and shaking hands with his son with vehemence. "And now I'll tell you what I heard the other day, when I was at the magistrates' meeting. They were all saying she had jilted Preston."

"I don't want to hear anything against her: she may have her faults, but I can never forget how I once loved her."

"Well, well! Perhaps it's right. I was not so bad about it, was I, Roger? Poor Osborne need not have been so secret with me. I asked your Miss Cynthia out here—and her mother and all—my bark is worse than my bite. For if I had a wish on earth it was to see Osborne married as befitted one of an old stock, and he went and chose out this French girl, of no family at all, only a——"

"Never mind what she was; look at what she is! I wonder you are not more taken with her humility and sweetness, father!"

"I don't even call her pretty," said the squire, uneasily, for he dreaded a repetition of the arguments which Roger had often used to make him give Aimée her proper due of affection and position. "Now your Miss Cynthia was pretty, I will say that for her, the baggage! and to think that when you two lads flew right in your father's face, and picked out girls below you in rank and family, you should neither of you have set your fancies on my little Molly there. I daresay I should ha' been angry enough at the time, but the lassie would ha' found her way to my heart, as never this French lady, nor t' other one, could ha' done."

Roger did not answer.

"I don't see why you might not put up for her still. I'm humble enough now, and you're not heir as Osborne was who married a servant-maid. Don't you think you could turn your thoughts upon Molly Gibson, Roger?"

"No!" said Roger, shortly. "It's too late—too late. Don't let us talk any more of my marrying. Is not this the five-acre field?" And soon he was discussing the relative values of meadow, arable and pasture land with his father, as heartily as if he had never known Molly, or loved Cynthia. But the squire was not in such good spirits, and went but heavily into the discussion. At the end of it he said *à propos de bottes*,

"But don't you think you could like her if you tried, Roger?"

Roger knew perfectly well to what his father was alluding, but for an instant he was on the point of pretending to misunderstand. At length, however, he said, in a low voice,

"I shall never try, father. Don't let us talk any more about it. As I said before, it is too late."

The squire was like a child to whom some toy has been refused; from time to time the thought of his disappointment in this matter recurred to his mind; and then he took to blaming Cynthia as the primary cause of Roger's present indifference to womankind.

It so happened that on Molly's last morning at the Hall, she received her first letter from Cynthia—Mrs. Henderson. It was just before breakfast-time: Roger was out of doors, Aimée had not as yet come down; Molly was alone in the dining-room, where the table was already laid. She had just finished reading her letter when the squire came in, and she immediately and joyfully told him what the morning had brought to her. But when she saw the squire's face she could have bitten her tongue out for having named Cynthia's name to him. He looked vexed and depressed.

"I wish I might never hear of her again. I do. She's been the bane of my Roger, that's what she has. I have not slept half the night, and it's all her fault. Why, there's my boy saying now that he has no heart for ever marrying, poor lad! I wish it had been you, Molly, my lads had taken a fancy for. I told Roger so t'other day, and I said that for all you

were beneath what I ever thought to see them marry,—well—it's of no use—it's too late, now, as he said. Only never let me hear that baggage's name again, that's all. And no offence to you, either, lassie. I know you love the wench; but if you'll take an old man's word, you're worth a score of her. I wish young men would think so too," he muttered as he went to the side-table to carve the ham, while Molly poured out the tea—her heart very hot all the time, and effectually silenced for a space. It was with the greatest difficulty that she could keep tears of mortification from falling. She felt altogether in a wrong position in that house, which had been like a home to her until this last visit. What with Mrs. Goodenough's remarks, and now this speech of the squire's, implying—at least to her susceptible imagination—that his father had proposed her as a wife to Rogér, and that she had been rejected, she was more glad than she could express, or even think, that she was going home this very morning. Roger came in from his walk while she was in this state of feeling. He saw in an instant that something had distressed Molly; and he longed to have the old friendly right of asking her what it was. But she had effectually kept him at too great a distance during the last few days for him to feel at liberty to speak to her in the old straightforward brotherly way; especially now, when he perceived her efforts to conceal her feelings, and the way in which she drank her tea in feverish haste, and accepted bread only to crumble it about her plate, untouched. It was all that he could do to make talk under these circumstances; but he backed up her efforts as well as he could until Aimée came down, grave and anxious; her boy had not had a good night, and did not seem well; he had fallen into a feverish sleep now, or she could not have left him. Immediately the whole table was in a ferment. The squire pushed away his plate, and could eat no more; Roger was trying to extract a detail or a fact out of Aimée, who began to give way to tears. Molly quickly proposed that the carriage, which had been ordered to take her home at eleven, should come round immediately—she had everything ready packed up, she said,—and bring back her father at once. By leaving directly, she said it was probable they might catch him after he had returned from his morning visits in the town, and before he had set off on his more distant round. Her proposal was agreed to, and she went upstairs to put on her things. She came down all ready into the drawing-room, expecting to find Aimée and the squire there; but during her absence word had been brought to the anxious mother and grandfather that the child had wakened up in a panic, and both had rushed up to their darling. But Roger was in the drawing-room awaiting Molly, with a large bunch of the choicest flowers.

"Look, Molly!" said he, as she was on the point of leaving the room again, on finding him there alone. "I gathered these flowers for you before breakfast." He came to meet her reluctant advance.

"Thank you!" said she. "You are very kind. I am very much obliged to you."

"Then you must do something for me," said he, determined not to notice the restraint of her manner, and making the re-arrangement of the flowers which she held a sort of link between them, so that she could not follow her impulse, and leave the room.

"Tell me,—honestly as I know you will if you speak at all,—have not I done something to vex you since we were so happy at the Towers together?"

His voice was so kind and true,—his manner so winning yet wistful, that Molly would have been thankful to tell him all; she believed that he could have helped her more than any one to understand how she ought to behave rightly; he would have disentangled her fancies,—if only he himself had not lain at the very core and centre of all her perplexity and dismay. How could she tell him of Mrs. Goodenough's words troubling her maiden modesty? How could she ever repeat what his father had said that morning, and assure him that she, no more than he, wished that their old friendliness should be troubled by the thought of a nearer relationship?

"No, you never vexed me in my whole life, Roger," said she, looking straight at him for the first time for many days.

"I believe you, because you say so. I have no right to ask further, Molly. Will you give me back one of those flowers, as a pledge of what you have said?"

"Take whichever you like," said she, eagerly offering him the whole nosegay to choose from.

"No; you must choose, and you must give it me."

Just then the squire came in. Roger would have been glad if Molly had not gone on so eagerly to ransack the bunch for the choicest flower in his father's presence; but she exclaimed:

"Oh, please, Mr. Hamley, do you know which is Roger's favourite flower?"

"No. A rose, I daresay. The carriage is at the door, and, Molly my dear, I don't want to hurry you, but——"

"I know. Here, Roger,—here is a rose!

("And red as a rose was she.")

I will find papa as soon as ever I get home. How is the little boy?"

"I'm afraid he's beginning of some kind of a fever."

And the squire took her to the carriage, talking all the way of the little boy; Roger following, and hardly heeding what he was doing in the answer to the question he kept asking himself: "Too late—or not? Can she ever forget that my first foolish love was given to one so different?"

While she, as the carriage rolled away, kept saying to herself,—
"We are friends again. I don't believe he will remember what the dear squire took it into his head to suggest for many days. It is so pleasant to be on the old terms again; and what lovely flowers!"

Ronda Fair.

ANDALUCIA differs from the rest of Spain as widely as though it were a separate country, and in the name of Ronda is summed up everything that is most Andalusian. The arid wastes of Castile are contrasted by the rich valleys and the rugged mountains of the southern kingdom; and the sombre, perhaps the stupid, dignity of the Castilians themselves is contrasted not less sharply with the rollicking carelessness of the men of Granada or Cadiz; but it is at Ronda that richness and severity mingle together in most perfect harmony, and it is there that the swagger and the broad humour of the majos most offend the fastidious taste of the Castilian. Nestling far up among the sierras, it is barred by their successive lines from the sea and from the valleys of the Jenal and the Guadalquivir; tracks that can only by utmost courtesy be called paths, lead over their ridges through country that till lately was of repute evil even for Spain, and except at the time of the great fair in May, little converse is held with the outer world. Then, however, from all the provinces, come droves of horses and mules; and for a week the plain outside the town is covered by tents, the streets are filled with an unaccustomed throng, and the gorgeous costumes of the local farmers, and the gay sashes and embroidery of the mountaineers, mingle with the more sober dresses of picadors and aficionados from every part of Spain.

For Ronda, therefore, it was that half-a-dozen subalterns and a stray traveller started from Gibraltar just before the fair-time of 1865. There is not much excitement now in a Spanish ride; and the cork wood through which, after the first half-dozen miles, the road lay for a long distance, gives in its glades and thick underwood, and overarched recesses of huge trees, an infinite number of spots where overworked officers may pass the hot hours of day in smoke and sleep till the approach of evening recalls them to the duties of mess and of yet more sleep. But till Espartero instituted the *Guarda Civil*, and the energy of O'Donnell used the instrument which his predecessor had fashioned, the cork wood was the central stronghold of the contrabandistas who managed the trade between Gibraltar and Spain. There of old they flourished undisturbed, profiting the people, the officials, and themselves, useful and respected members of a community which has always understood how to brighten the dull routine of money-getting by the piquant accessories of falsehood and murder. When at last they were meddled with, the friendship of customs' officers and the sympathy of the military allowed them to remain in reality almost unmolested; and while a stray party would hardly have been safe, no man would have been rash enough to intrude alone within

their domain. With the growth of strong government, however, they dwindled rapidly; and O'Donnell has earned the thanks of foreigners, and the not always unspoken hatred of the natives, by the firmness with which he acted against the smugglers. Contraband trade has even been brought within narrow limits; and if its agents are morally on a higher level than before, their life is hard, and their operations have become petty. Dogs who have been well treated for the purpose in Spain are taken within the English lines; they are beaten and starved, and then, with a bundle of goods tied on their backs, are let loose at sundown far outside the gates. In such miserable smuggling as this, no contrabandista with proper sense of dignity could engage; and the only traces of the old state of things which are to be found is the cork wood and the stories which attach to most of its inhabitants. One of these men with a history, a certain Manuel, was added to our party. He was an ancient picador and actual earth-stopper to the Gibraltar hunt. At the time when his walks were more by night than day, he had met, in the way of business, with a soldier, who, as he emphatically expressed it, *se moró*, happened to die, and Manuel had been thenceforth even more respected than before. He was a dare-devil, jovial fellow, full of broad humour, scamp enough to ask three times as much as was reasonable for his guidance to Ronda, and good fellow enough to take a fair payment with a laugh, and be all the better friends with us for our objection to be cheated. To be sure, it would have been no great strain to his temper had we asked him to go for nothing, for to an ex-picador the name of bull-fight is as exciting as the red flag to the bull himself; and Manuel's promptness of equipment was witness to his anxiety. In five minutes his wife had made up his bundle, he had saddled his horse, and was leading the way at a gallop, with wild gesticulations and contrabandial song. At first we went still through the cork wood, then, after a while, the country opened out into a valley, watered by one of the branches of the Guadiaro, its floor sprinkled with oxen, knee-deep in thick pasture, and its sides chequered with yellowing fields of corn, and sombre groves of ilex and of cork. Here and there a closely-huddled village, high up on a steep hill-top, spoke of the days when Moors and Spaniards fought for every inch along the hardly-contested border, and scarcely less of Carlist and Christino wars, when every defensible house was the scene of irregular skirmishing. In front, the crests of the sierras began to heave their abrupt and stony shapes. More or less, these elements made up the scenery of the whole ride. Sometimes we cantered through the pastures, now floundering into hidden bogs, now striking the remnants of a paved Moorish recife; at others, we scrambled over boulders, half hidden in fan-palms and heather, where gleams of sun, through the sparkling evergreens, lit masses of gorgeous flowers, and distant sierras showed hazy with heat through the gaps in the leaves. At other times, again, we picked our way through sandy watercourses, or yet again, burst over carpets of close turf under avenues of olive. Here and there, from the tops of hills, we would have

vistas, through the many ranges of far-off plains, of the Mediterranean, or of the Apes' Hill, still further away, in Africa. Never for a mile was the scene unchanged, never was it otherwise than beautiful; and in its beauty an indefinable air of wildness, not of that tempered kind which affects the outskirts of population, but that frank, utter wildness which is associated with the absence of mankind. Although there were sometimes traces of cultivation, and, at distant intervals, a house or a town might be seen perched afar off, it seemed as if man was only an accidental passer-by, and had no abiding in the place. This was more true, naturally, of some parts of the country than of others. Our second day's ride led all through the heart of the sierras, through a settled and a cultivated land. There was a path, often fully five feet wide; vineyards circled not infrequent farmhouses; and the upper waters of the Guadiaro, brawling over stony shallows, or resting in quiet pools under dipping willows and alders, mocked the eye with a promise of trout which in Southern Spain is always false. The scenery, in fact, was much like that of the lower end of a Highland valley, with southern sky and southern details of vegetation.

Our first day's journey was long, and night had already fallen, when we led our horses through the *salle à manger* of the *Venta al Cortez* into the stable behind. Every one knows the nature of a Spanish country inn; its division into two chambers—the one for the horses, the other for the men; its foodlessness, its skin-flavoured wine, its diet, the ignorance of its keeper that his calling involves service, are all written endlessly in the chronicles of Ford, and of every traveller who has imagined for himself the merit of unusual roughing, and has sketched in proportionately deep colours the privations which he has undergone. It seems to me, however, that some injustice has been done to Spanish inns; and if a man does not object to groom his own horse, if he can live on eggs, good bread, and *Amontillado*, sleep on a clean floor with his saddle-bags for pillows, and is able to do himself what he wants to be done, he need never be wretched in Andalucia at least. For my own part, this hardly seems to me to reach further than that point of roughness which lends an additional fillip to enjoyment; and we after our twelve hours' ride undoubtedly felt its pleasure, or else were inspired by the contents of a vast two-gallon jar of wine, which, passing from mouth to mouth, barely satisfied our wants during dinner; for as the evening drew in, nigger melodies and lugubrious songs swelled in louder and louder chorus through the still air of Cortez. We were seated in a little recess or fire-place, which, with the broad passage leading through from the street to the stable, composed the ground-floor of the *venta*: gradually the wider space filled with a dense living mass; with boys marking time in vehement sympathy with our song; with broad-faced girls, like the *Dulcinea* of *Gustave Doré*, shrilly laughing with prolonged crescendo of sound as every chorus ended in a louder shout; with older men and women who were somewhat surprised at such behaviour on the part of great English señores from Gibraltar, but

who were far too well bred to listen otherwise than with polite attention, and who in the bottom of their hearts would have been only too glad to join with us in one great revel of voice and wine. Presently a *cornet-à-piston* wandered somehow into the crowd; it was seized at once; one of our party played, then a Spaniard took a turn, then came an alternation of English and of Spanish songs, and it was past twelve before we cleared out our self-invited guests, and went upstairs to make the difficult allotment among six men of two mattresses, two trestles, and one brick floor.

It was still early in the next day when Ronda came suddenly within view as we turned an elbow of one of the hills which encompass the basin in which it lies. The first sight was not very remarkable; a ford through which a long train of horses for the fair were splashing at the moment—a grim black cross, one of those registers of murder so common by the waysides in Spain—a long arid tract, stony and treeless, which led with even slope to a line of red-tiled houses some two miles away—an equally arid series of reddish-grey hills behind—formed a picture typical, perhaps, but hardly such as might be expected from the famous beauty of Ronda. But while we mounted the stony waste we were suddenly checked. Beneath our horses' feet dropped sheer a range of lofty cliffs which curved round in a vast amphitheatre, and following with their crests the upward slope of the hill on which we were, presented under the town an absolutely perpendicular face of more than six hundred feet. At their base lay dense woods of chestnut and oak, which stretched over an undulating fall towards the mouth of the valley up which we had come, and clothed the hill side which formed the southern half of the amphitheatre. Through the trees could be rather heard than seen the tumbling waters of the Guadiaro issuing apparently from the very cliffs themselves, and looking backwards and around we saw grand forms of larger mountains rising above the tame hills which had hitherto limited our view. As we mounted still further, we could see that Ronda stood upon a plateau some eight miles in diameter, barren in parts, but over the larger portion glowing with rich verdure. Encircled by hills it could scarcely be said in strictness to be, for the neighbouring sierras may all be roughly said to trend north-west and south-east, and the level space is formed by the sinking of two of the minor ranges; but it is entirely surrounded at least by mountains which are the more picturesque that some obtrude straight flanks, and some ribbed corners, on the plain. The higher summits of these mountains, jut forth in huge teeth of fantastic shapes, but governing the individual eccentricities in a tendency to upheave in great curves towards the south, which, in the half dark of sundown, gives them an air of life, as of monsters, like that in Turner's Garden of the Hesperides, painfully dragging their ringed bodies along. As has been already said, a second stage underlies the plateau, and this, at the point where the Guadiaro seems to gush from the rocks, communicates with a more gently-sided valley above the town by a winding gorge called the Tajo, narrow enough to be spanned by a single

arch. Whether the scenery of the Tajo—beginning in the mellowed grandeur of the cliff-edged woods, passing the mills built in stages one over the other in the bed of the falling river, passing the bridge, partly Moorish partly Spanish in its workmanship, to where the gorge some thirty yards across is walled by upright rocks four hundred feet in height—or whether the wide expanse of plain and valley and sierra seen from the Alameda, be the more glorious, it would be hard to say; but, each in its kind, they are undoubtedly of beauty rare at once in nature and degree.

The side on which we entered Ronda was that of the horse-fair; as soon as we had installed ourselves, therefore, we retraced our steps to the bare brow where some eight hundred or a thousand horses and mules were hobbled or picketed. In the chief fair of the province, it would naturally be expected that large numbers of young horses of good native breed would have been brought for sale. To our astonishment, we found scarcely any; with the exception of perhaps half-a-dozen, they were old Roman-nosed, long-toed and cow-hocked screws, bearing traces of their origin, no doubt, but withal as ugly and useless-looking a lot of animals as could well be conceived. They obviously, for the most part, did not belong to private men, but had been coopered up by jockeys for sale, and their temporary owners were continually riding them about on the curb in that showy style which takes a Spanish fancy so much. The few good horses that there were, were exclusively Andalucian, and they, almost equally with the rest, had the great fault of oyster hoofs and weak hind-quarters. The collection at Ronda was disappointing, and Andalucian horses generally are unpromising enough; it would, however, be a great mistake utterly to despise them. On their invariable diet of chopped straw, they contrive to get through an immense amount of work, and they are sure-footed to a degree absolutely marvellous in the rough ground, through which their ordinary travelling lies, and over which the risk of taking an English horse would be extreme. For an entire day they will go, with a long high amble, slow to outward appearance, but in some way covering the ground at a rate which can only be appreciated when one attempts to overtake them. This amble, if easy for the horse, is scarcely less pleasant for the rider, who, when once he has got to understand it, can sit without fatigue or motion for as long as his horse will carry him. In most places, moreover, it is the only pace, with the exception of a walk, which the nature of the ground will allow. But with this special accomplishment, with his endurance and sure-footedness, is closed the list of merits as a goer which the Andalucian horse possesses; he will canter readily enough when he is fed up with unaccustomed corn, but seldom can he be forced into a gallop, and of a trot he is absolutely incapable. Curiously enough, while possessing themselves so inferior a type of animal, the Andalucians never import barbs, because, as is said, the latter are unsuited to the country. It is difficult to understand that this reason can be well-founded, for a large part at least of Morocco is as hilly and rugged as the most roadless districts of Andalucia; yet it is equally difficult to

suppose that any other reason could prevent the introduction of so decidedly superior a breed.

However ugly the horses at Ronda were individually, they could at least help to make up an effective picture, and there was no want over the wide field in which they were of scenes such as those with which Phillip has made every one familiar. Horses in long lines broken by their struggles to move stood hobbled, mixed with great nules more handsome by far than their legitimate brothers, their gay worsted tassels and the boughs set to protect them from the flies waving in bright colours about them, while the jangling of their bells, and their neighs, and the braying of an occasional donkey, almost drowned the continued scream into which were merged the infinity of bargaining, joking, quarrelling, declaiming voices of men. Now and then a greater tumult in some corner of the fair, and a hasty scattering of people, would announce that some horses had burst loose and carried battle and alarm into the neighbouring crowds of animals and men. Sometimes a fight thus begun would spread over an area of several hundred yards, and would last for half-an-hour before the plunging, kicking, biting mass of frightened beasts could be calmed and disentangled. Meantime in other parts the common business went on: burly farmers, clad from head to foot in black velvet, would be chaffering with not more knowing jockeys; and jaunty majos, with scarlet fajas, embroidered coats, tight breeches fitting without crease to their slender thighs, gaiters trailing a brick-red fringe along the ground, and with a long white wand in their hand, would be picking their way daintily among the ragged gipsies, and the devil-may-care tribe of drovers and hangers-on. Here and there water-carriers elbowed their way, balancing on their shoulders large earthen jars, with reeds through the cork from which the water is sucked; and Gitañas, usually old and ugly, crouched at the doors of tents, with fires on the ground on which slices of gourd sputtered and fried incessantly. Through all the streets of the town the same crowd, the same noise; but there, instead of horses, every commodity that Andalusian necessities or extravagance can require. Each house had its lower windows taken out, so that the ground-floor rooms were converted into open stalls, and in double line down the great thoroughfare stood booths and sheds besides.

Among the more aristocratic traders, the shopmen of Madrid took the lead, with corner houses of many openings, all filled with silver plate; but cottons from England and Mulhouse almost contested precedence by the vastness of the space which they occupied. Herr Betrüger had brought a large stock of foreign toys from Nüremberg; crinolines were appropriately imported from Paris; and a scorpion, as livers in the booths are called, had hazarded the strange venture of bitter beer, which, with liqueurs, he dispensed to not unappreciating mouths. But the mass of the booths of course displayed the fruits of native industry alone. Brilliant-coloured fajas, worked in silk, hung out in festoons or streamers; embossed and tinselled saddlery, the coarse striped canvas which

gives for cloak or counterpane, skins tanned of that peculiar red which Andalusians affect so much, first struck the eye by the force of their colours; but more curious were the different kinds of cutlery; small inoffensive knives, not made to close, but kept in leather cases, with blades three inches long, and an inch and a half broad; knives of very opposite intent, with long thin points, but bulging above, so as to enlarge the wound under the fifth rib, which it is the office of the point to make; finally, knives for full dress, not working in satchels like the last, but boasting of a spring, and rich with green foil and inlaid glass; and more curious still, the bizarre mixture of crucifixes, castanets, religious pictures, and fifes, which covered the boards of many a stall.

Such were the objects and sounds that filled the eyes and ears in Ronda Fair, with their brightness, their bustle, their fulness, and their clamour. But in three successive afternoons there was a time when all the noise and business was hushed throughout the town, and its whole life was concentrated in the bull ring. There, for several hours before the fight, patient and good-tempered, stood a long queue outside the gates, till, much earlier than the time fixed for the performance, all the six thousand seats within were occupied, save a few on which the slanting sun poured too fully to allow of sight. Once inside, the eagerness of the mass sank into apparent indifference. A well-bred dislike to do anything exceptional, or to put self forward in any way, restrained every one from those ebullitions which would have enlivened the waiting of an English crowd; it sat generally silent, sometimes sleepily, sometimes drumming with the everlasting white wand. Some, more original or more vain, conceived and executed the bold idea of walking across the ring, but these were all either exceptionally well-dressed, and so could swagger with an air, or were too ragged and mean to be diffident, and so could swagger from mere effrontery. Water-carriers bore about their huge jars, gamins ran and played practical jokes on each other, like idle boys elsewhere, and the butchers, who have to kill the wounded horses and cut up the bulls, slunk mysteriously by, for no obvious reason, along the alley beneath the seats. Then the greater aficionados, who had been inspecting the bulls, came pompously to their seats; the bull contractor, attended by a knot of friends, stepped, amid shouts of greeting, to his box over the entrance for his animals; and at last, preceded by a flourish of trumpets, the procession of the fighters issued from an opposite door, with the picadors in front, the chullos behind, and finally, Cucharas, greatest matador of Spain, and Domínguez, his scarcely inferior companion. They advanced to the middle of the arena; the picadors turned right and left to the station most opposed to the bulls' first rush. Cucharas, in front of the contractor's box, took the accustomed oath to kill or to be himself killed, and then the key was handed down, and the folding-gates were opened for the entry of the first bull. From out the darkness he lounged forward to the door, stayed for a moment as if dazzled by the glare and wondering at the throng; then caught sight of

a horse, and, as if by one movement, rushed over the breadth of the ring, hurled the picador from his saddle, and the horse to the ground. He was a black undersized bull of astonishing speed and strength; but, like all the rest, with an awkward action, as though the body and legs were borne helplessly along by the enormous throat, which, working in every muscle, seemed to sway itself over the earth by its own mere weight. Like the rest, too, after the first charge, he seemed worried and puzzled rather than angry, willing to leave men and horses alone if he might, but willing also, if he might not, to resent very grimly indeed each successive interference. Distracted by the flags and cloaks which waved in his eyes from every side, he left the horse after goring him repeatedly, and retired to the middle of the ring. Then for a moment he stood with his nose held low, pawing and glaring. Another picador moved towards him, and again, with clumsily headlong force, he rolled over man and animal in an undistinguishable mass, goring, and with each gore lowing from the depths of his chest. Seven or eight times he repeated his charges. Sometimes he was successful as before; sometimes he was foiled by the skill of the picador, and turned from the unhurt horse with the additional irritation of a lance-prick. At length, when five horses had been disabled, the bandilleros were called for; and the more graceful part of the fight was going to begin, when his career was abruptly stopped by an accident of the most ludicrous kind. One of the horses which he had killed lay in the centre of the arena, and whencesoever or whithersoever the bull went the body was invariably in the way. Evidently the bull resented this as a deliberate provocation, and whenever a moment's pause took place he filled up the time by a new rush at his insulting foe. When the picadors were withdrawn, and the chullos had not yet neared him, he obviously considered the opportunity favourable for another expression of disgust, and, gathering all his force, charged once again so viciously that both his horns stuck fast. For fully half a minute he remained balanced, his head half buried in the horse's body, his legs kicking feebly in the air; then with a resounding crash he fell on the opposite side, dragging over his enemy with him, and for some time lay motionless. When at last he recovered consciousness and rose, it was with dazed look and shaking feet, and a bull, more than any other of the year worthy of a noble end, had to be put out of the way in a manner, to a genuine aficionado, distressingly quick and inartistic. Another bull was the involuntary hero of a more startling incident. He was a poor mean-spirited wretch, who fled before the picadors, went moaning to the door by which he had come in, and could not be goaded by the sting of the bandilleros to rush or even to face attack. At the frequent cry of "fuoco! fuoco!" from the impatient people, darts girdled with hand-rockets were planted in his back, and his cowering fear was changed into furious terror. Maddened by the burning of his flesh, by the long darts which fixed in his skin by barbs, beat about his ears as he moved, by the shower of sparks, and by the explosions of the rockets, he galloped round and round the arena,

pawing at the barrier, leaping by turns, and sometimes in his desperation almost scrambling over. Suddenly he stood still opposite that part which the glare of the sun had fortunately left almost empty of spectators, and with one mighty effort cleared the barrier, passed the alley beyond, and lighted in the second row of seats. The leap was about ten feet in height, and could not have been less than sixteen or eighteen in horizontal distance. A body of soldiers stationed close by with fixed bayonets, flung down their muskets and plunged into the alley; the people on either side rose in panic; some took refuge in the ring, some spread confusion to the further seats, and, in fact, had the bull understood the impossibility of escape and the sweetness of revenge, the results might have been frightful. But his sole idea was to get away—to his excited imagination, one man seemed as likely as another to be the owner of a banderilla, and he merely clambered further and further up, in the hope of finding an outlet. By the time, however, that he was at the topmost bank of seats, the whole body of fighters were upon him, and when he turned aside from the wall towards the still near chaos of struggling people, Cucharos had already clutched him by the tail, and he was pushed, hustled, and pricked down to the alley, where his undignified life was closed by the hands of the common butcher.

For the rest, the bull-fights of Ronda were such as can be seen every day at some place or other in Spain, and as have been again and again described. In the short career of each bull there were the same incidents to disgust and to excite. The sport, so far as the horses are concerned, is simply and absolutely revolting. If the horses which are employed were in the prime of their life and carefully trained, as was formerly the case, the risk to which they would be exposed might possibly be so diminished as not to be more than man ordinarily conceives himself to have a right by usage to require that they bear. But as it is, miserable starved brutes, fit only for the knacker's yard, are sent into the ring bearing a man swaddled in cork and banded with iron, so heavy that they can barely stagger under his weight; they are ridden with their eyes bandaged in order that they may not by unmanageableness increase the danger and the wages of the picador, and their only use is to feast the populace, not satisfied by the death of the bull, with a sufficiency of blood. They effect little towards fatiguing the bull; they add nothing to the beauty of the sport. In Mexico, they are never employed. Their only use is to afford the opportunity of seeing an animal which has been striving in a half intelligent way to carry out the wishes of man, tread on its own entrails, or lie craving piteously for help during half-an-hour at a time while the applauded bull returns again and again to gore him. It is very different, however, with the bull. After all, man is the god of the animal creation, and, rightly or wrongly, it makes a vast difference in our sympathies whether a beast acts in accordance with or in opposition to his will. The bull is an ill-conditioned brute, rejoicing in strife and fated to be killed sooner or later; he gets probably a more

satisfactory death in the ring than in the slaughter-house, and he gives occasion for a display on the part of man of courage, of cultivated agility, of the keenest eye, and of the finest skill. Nothing can be more skillful than the manner in which he is played with by the chullos : their leaps over his horns ; their passages within a foot of his head, while he rushes at full speed ; the quickness with which they guide him away from a fallen comrade, or with which they plant the darts in his back and before his face ; above all, the delicacy and the daring with which their more perfect artists trail the capa before him at a walk, and direct his fury to an inch. Nor can the bull be said to be without his chances, when his slaughterer stands almost motionless within eighteen inches of his horns, with nothing but his own quick eye to save him from the fatal stroke of his antagonist. With one swift motion of the hand, the animal is killed in an instant, and almost bloodlessly. A very serious drawback of bull-fighting as a sport is that it must be exercised by professionals alone, and that no man, however strong in nerve and active in limb, however accustomed to wild sports of other kinds, can engage in it without a long apprenticeship in the bloodless romps rather than fights with young bulls, in which the chullos and matadors learn the character of the animal, and the method of guiding and distracting him.

With the bull-fights the Fair of Ronda closed ; a few days saw the heterogeneous elements which had come together for the moment restored to their appropriate places. In like manner the rest departed, and two other days' ride over the crests of the hills under which we had ridden before, brought us back to the mess-room of Gibraltar, through scenery even more superb than that of the outward road.

Recollections of the Life of Joseph Haywood, and some of his Thoughts about Music.

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WHENEVER in the heat of musical argument I have allowed myself to give way to those common expressions of discontented old age, "Now-a-days" and "In my time," a visitation of doubting and profound humility succeeds, in which I am tempted to set down half my opinions to the intolerance of my advancing years, so naturally averse to change—alas ! even averse to improvement that includes change.

After all, what does that contemptuous "Now-a-days" mean ? or that "In my time," pronounced with such regretful pride ? For the most part, only that the clouds are emptied of their light, that the little rose-coloured islands have become mere violet blots upon a grey sky, that the sun has gone down ; and I endeavour to become resigned to the idea that possibly it is only my own sere and yellow leaf that is at fault, and which makes it a matter of impossibility with me to digest food that the rest of the world finds both palatable and sufficient for nourishment. I then endeavour to console myself with the heroic but uncheerful consideration that it is doubtless better that I should be a fastidious and cantankerous old man than that the musical taste of my country should be going to the dogs altogether ; and that, provided the sacred fire still burns in many breasts, it matters comparatively but little that upon one small altar a heap of cold white ashes should be lying.

A short stay in London, from which I had come away in a state of grievous discouragement with regard to the cultivation of musical taste in England, had thrown me by turns into these different phases of melancholy, until a day or two ago, when I went up to the Court to dine with my friend Lord Winterton. In the evening, his niece, Miss Jane Trevor, played to perfection some of old Sebastian Bach's enchanting dance-music—full of smiles and good faith, of gentle humour and tender fancy. I could have cried for joy, first over the exquisite grace and charm of the things, and then again for joy at finding that I was not the corpse I fancied I had become—that real beauty had the power to stir my depths as much as ever it had done in the ardent years of youthful enthusiasm, and that it was, as I *knew* it was, the utter want of the divine imaginative quality which belongs to all the really great masters, that had made me rebel against that vulgar noise which seems so entirely to have taken the place of better things in the fashionable world of music.

Of the gradual decadence in vocal art within the last thirty years, I

had tangible proof the same evening; for in looking through Lady Jane Trevor's collection of Bellini's music, I found it full of passages which the tenor singers now in vogue would find it next to impossible to master; and going further back still, and taking up Rossini's opera of *Ricciardo e Zoraide*, I discovered that it contained no less than three great tenor parts, the least important of which would be beyond the strength of most of the tenors of the present day, whose powers of vocalization are so limited, that the orchestral accompaniment is generally made to play in unison with the voice every passage at all difficult of execution, so that the noise of the instruments effectually drowns any possible defect on the part of the singer.

These revolutions take place almost imperceptibly to those who remain stationary, and around whom they are working gradually day by day: as for me, I had ample power of comparing the present and the past, for I had been away for a lapse of years, and had heard no music in the interval; there had been nothing to soften the lines of change, nothing with which to bridge over the gulf between what was and is, and I can hardly describe the shock it was to my feelings on my return to Europe to find the true gods overthrown, and horrible idols—creatures of wood and stone—set up in their places. I had left England some five-and-twenty years ago, as tutor to a family who were going abroad. I was then about twenty-five years old myself, and a passionate lover of music. My father, who was a very poor country curate, with a large number of children, had also a violin; and I think this instrument, upon which he played very beautifully, was almost as dear to him as any of his children. Certainly, he owed it some gratitude, for it was the one prettiness of a life painted too much in greys; the only solace of an over-worked, over-burdened existence, the only consolation he had to fall back upon in the midst of the daily increasing troubles of a large family, and the difficulties of educating and providing for us all. My poor mother, who was of a nervous, excitable temperament, when we came in with our best—oftenest our only suit of clothes, tattered and soiled, to be repaired as best they might, by those indefatigable fingers of hers; or when three or four of us were saying our lessons to her, and the baby (the baby seemed a permanent institution at the parsonage) roaring all the while in her arms—would sometimes go almost wild with irritation at hearing the long-drawn-out notes of the violin proceeding placidly by the hour together from my father's little study. "And there he is, whining again!" she would sometimes exclaim, but she never asked him to stop, though she had to cast every sum up three or four times over, whenever the arithmetic and the violin went on together.

Little Mary and myself are the only members of the family who have inherited my father's fondness for music; and our great delight was to creep unperceived into the study, and lie hidden in the recess underneath his writing-table, while he stood up playing by the casement that opened

upon our little garden—his pale face growing dark and sharp against the twilight, and the carnations giving out all their odour in the quiet evening air. I can never smell a carnation now without hearing my dear father's "Bid me Discourse," or "Sally in our Alley," and those tunes will smell of carnations and feel of evening dew to me, to the last days of my life. The next music which I heard, was when I was sent up to London as a lad of sixteen to complete my education. I was quartered upon Philip Warde, an old friend and schoolfellow of my father's, and attended Westminster School daily.

Philip Warde had a splendid mansion (or at least what seemed so to me after our tiny parsonage) in Bloomsbury Square. He was a well-to-do lawyer, with six children—three boys and three girls. When I lived there, the eldest boy, Bill, was clerk in a respectable banking-house in the city; the eldest girl, Susannah, was nineteen—a fair likeness of her father, with the same sweet smile, and the same lovely, *moral* countenance. Emily was sixteen, and little Ursula fourteen. Then came the two small boys, Bob and Harry, who were a good deal younger, and at school away down in the country.

In this house my musical taste was continually fostered and ministered to. Philip Warde, who was a remarkably handsome man of about five-and-forty, had not only the most winning speaking voice in the world, but also one of the finest basses it was possible to hear. He was altogether a delightful creature—handsome, happy, and good. He had married upon nothing when he was very young, and his plain little wife, who had cheered and supported him through all the troubles and struggles of their early life, loved him still in mature age with that sort of passionate adoration that seems generally only to belong to the fervent season of one's youth. They were both blessed with that greatest of all blessings—excellent animal spirits. What jolly Christmas parties we used to have to be sure, when Philip led off Money-musk with Mrs. Warde, and we pounded away at Sir Roger de Coverley till three in the morning! All that is gone out now, and it is considered the right thing to shuffle about all out of time, as if one could not hear the music, and as if one did not know how to dance, and could not bear it. But in those days, a thing to see were Philip's handsome legs, in tights fitting close to the shape all the way down to the ankle, doing such intricate steps, footing it so daintily to the measure, and every now and then cutting the most lovely capers to excite the admiration of us youngsters. When the clock struck twelve we used to go down to supper—such negus! such calves-foot jelly! such tippy-cake! I used to think there was nothing like it! Indeed it would have been difficult to find anywhere a happier family circle.

Glee-singing was the music most successfully cultivated in this house: Bill sang tenor, with capital lungs of his own; sweet Susannah Warde was soprano, Emily took the alto, and Philip's deep voice came growling

tunefully in, in the depths below, like a magnificent organ. All Calcott's and Horsley's charming glees they used to sing—and quaint old madrigals of another day, that rippled away sunnily like intermingling streams of clearest water: the long habit of singing together, and the kindred quality of the voices, made their execution of this kind of music absolute perfection. Then on Sundays Handel used to be the order of the day. Philip would sing, "Shall I, in Mamre's fertile plain," and sweet Susannah Warde would give us, "What though I trace," and then we always wound up with, "O ruddier than the cherry," which was Philip's great song, of which his wife was justly proud, and which she always would ask for, saying that though it was not sacred it was Handel, which meant nearly the same thing.

Ah dear old time! Ah gentle people! The dark years have divided us, but you are not forgotten.

In Lent, Philip Warde would often take me to the oratorios that used to be given at the great theatres on the Wednesdays and Fridays, which during that season were devoted entirely to musical performances.

My first oratorio was a memorable event in my life: I thought it so then, with life before me—I think it so still, looking back upon it now that I have lived. We were to have the *Israel in Egypt*. In general Mr. Warde was punctuality itself, but on this occasion he had been detained by unexpected business, and dinner was a whole hour later than usual, instead of half-an-hour earlier, as it was to have been. At every ring of the bell, I, and the girls in their white frocks and blue sashes, dashed out upon the stairs to see if it was the master come home, and at each fresh disappointment I felt almost ready to cry with impatience. I kept looking at the bill, and felt sure that every piece of music I most wished to hear would be over by the time we got there; and, indeed it was very late when we reached the theatre, and the performance had long been begun. We flew along the lobby, and hastily taking our places in the dress circle, came in for the concluding bars of a magnificent chorus. After which a little thick-set man, with a light brown wig all over his eyes, a generally common appearance, and most unmistakably Jewish aspect, got up to sing one single line of recitative. He stood with his head well on one side, held his music also on one side, and far out before him, gave a funny little stamp with his foot, and then proceeded to lay in his provision of breath with such a tremendous shrug of his shoulders and swelling of his chest, that I very nearly burst out laughing.

He said—"But the children of Israel went on dry land"—and then he paused; and every sound was hushed throughout that great space; and then, as if carved out upon the solid stillness, came those three little words, "*Through the sea!*" And our breath failed, and our pulses ceased to beat, and we bent our heads, as all the wonder of the miracle seemed to pass over us with those accents—awful, radiant, resonant, triumphant! He sat down while the whole house thundered its applause.

I turned to Philip Warde in speechless agitation. "Braham!" said he, wiping his eyes.

I often afterwards heard this greatest singer of our country, who was, doubtless, among the greatest of any age or country; but although the stamp of genius was on everything that he did, strangely mixed up with it was a love of gallery popularity, which led him continually into faults of taste. What could exceed the profound pathos of his "Deeper and deeper still?" His "Lash me into madness" still rings through all my fibres: but then again, just at the end of "Waft her, angels," with which he had seemed to lift one into paradise, he must needs roar out an interminable cadence, hideous and vulgar, for which the gods cheered him, but for which in sober truth he deserved to be hissed.

Little Bob and Harry used to find the first parts of these entertainments rather dry work, but would wake up for the third part, which was always miscellaneous, and which I hated: I always used to come down from the sublime altitudes of old Handel upon the dull earth again with a sort of bump; but they delighted in the lighter music; and indeed Mr. Braham's singing of such songs as, "When the lads of the village," "Let us go to Kelvin Grove," "March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale," and the "Bay of Biscay," was every bit as spirited and fine, as perfect in its accent and expression, as his pathos and dramatic genius were unsurpassed in the greater things he did.

The only friendship I made at Westminster was with little Lord Winterton. He was a sickly little lad of about fourteen, with continual headaches; and our intimacy grew, first, out of my preventing his being bullied because he could not play much and rough it as the others did,—and then, out of my looking after him, and lending him books when his family were abroad and he broke his arm out sliding and was laid up and lonely.

He had several sisters, of whom he used occasionally to make mention when we had become chums, and who sang most beautifully, according to his account. I used to tell him of our music in Bloomsbury Square, and then he would say with the most provoking coolness: "Ah, you should hear Lady Jane sing!" This was his favourite sister, and he often spoke of her when he was ill and I came to sit with him. Once or twice we nearly quarrelled when I was vaunting Miss Warde's singing, and he only remarked with a languid superiority, and as if he had heard all the world: "Ah, you haven't heard Lady Jane!"

The fact was, that about this time I was fast growing out of the mere schoolboy into the sentimental phase of hobbledohoyhood, and Susannah Warde was the first woman whom I was beginning to look upon as a woman.

I had often heard her say, after we had been talking of my dear old father and the life at home, that she thought the perfection of happiness must be to live in a dear little cottage all honeysuckles and carnations,

with a gentle-hearted, hard-working country curate for a husband: and forgetful of the years that lay between us, and fired with a new tumult of almost unacknowledged hopes, I bent all my thoughts towards the church, and implored my father to send me to Oxford. Poor man! He could ill afford to spare the necessary sum of money for this fresh expense, and I fretted myself and my mother nearly into a fever with my anxiety and impatient restlessness. Luckily—I did not think so then—they were not called upon to make the sacrifices they were prepared to make for the fulfilment of my desire.

Just at this time, Susannah went to pay a visit of a month to a married friend of hers who lived at Woolwich; and when next I heard from the Wardes, (I was at home at the parsonage then,) it was to tell me that she was going to be married to a Captain Knockam Garth. It was not a good marriage in a worldly sense, but they were not worldly people. Philip Warde, who doted on his daughter, was greatly overset when he first heard of the engagement, and rather inclined to oppose it; but the mother remembered her own early days, and made her husband remember them, and their own true young love; and so finally his objections were overruled, and Captain Garth became an accepted lover.

As there was some probability of his regiment being soon ordered upon foreign service, a very few weeks only intervened between the engagement and the marriage. They were very wretched weeks to me, and I shame to say it, in my selfish, jealous passion, I made them so to all around me. I was bitter against the whole world, and sore about everything.

Sometimes I thought with contempt and almost hatred of her for having, as I chose to represent it to myself, sacrificed a true love to the false glitter of position; while the facts were, that Captain Garth was as poor as a church mouse, and that she had never felt anything for me but the sort of sisterly regard a kind-hearted young woman of her age, and with brothers of her own, was almost sure to experience for an awkward friendless schoolboy, living in the same house. But this, the true aspect of the matter, was too mortifying to my pride and vanity to be entertained for a single instant, and I preferred thinking myself the victim of a woman's fickleness and treachery: it invested me, in my own eyes at least, with a dignity and importance which were more flattering to my feelings. Sometimes I used to wonder whether she would *dare*—(I actually put it so to myself;)—whether Susannah would *dare* to bid to her wedding the man she had so deeply wronged. Then as the time grew near and nearer, and no sign came from any of them, I had fits of absolute rage against them all, that in their idiotic delight at what I was pleased to call this *new thing*, I, their old dear friend, was laid by and unremembered. And then my rage all went out suddenly like a spent flame, and I would lie for hours far away in the fields, crying my heart out for the intolerable aching desolateness, the grievous grievous pain of their having forgotten me.

At this time my poor mother, too, became a source of the greatest annoyance to me. My father was a good deal away from the house, and always very absent and preoccupied when he was in it; but my mother saw well enough that something was going badly with me, I daresay she had even made half a guess at the truth, for in matters of the heart all women—the very dullest—become sharp, and I noticed that she never once mentioned Susannah's name to me. Her tender pity would flow out to me in a thousand little acts of watchful affection; but any unusual demonstration of this kind only made me imagine that I was looked upon as an object of compassion, and this I resented bitterly, beyond all measure. Then when I had met her warmth with coldness, scaring her into silence either with sullen sarcasm or savage irritability, and she no longer ventured to take me in her arms and question me, or make troubled remarks upon my white face and feverish hands, she would follow me with tearful looks wherever I moved about the room, until I used to rush from the house in a state of perfect frenzy, that I might escape from the unceasing importunity of those wistful mother's eyes. I was very mad, and very bad, and—God forgive me for it!—I still thought that before the end—the end of all—was consummated, some one must surely take some notice of me. But no! One by one the days passed, and no letter arrived. Then a dreadful day—the date of which I well knew—came too, and rolled heavily away, and still no sign!

Two mornings afterwards a packet was brought to me; it contained a white favour, a large piece of wedding-cake, and a letter from Mrs. Warde. I tied the favour on our tomcat, and gave the cake to the children; but the letter was so kind and tender that I could not bring myself to tear it up. It was as follows:—

“DEAR JOE,—

“THE marriage is over, and our dear girl has left us. And now that I sit down with her empty chair beside me—that chair where she has sat, our pride and our joy, for so many years—my eyes and my heart are full of tears, and I can't help thinking of you, dear Joe, and writing to you, for I think you will want to hear from some of us to-day; and as the young ones are all too much excited just at present to settle down quietly to pen and paper, you must put up with my account of matters, though I fear I shall not be able to write quite as cheerfully as I ought. Captain Garth is about thirty-five—just thirteen years older than Susie; but this I think quite a fault on the right side, especially where the life is likely to be so full of ups and downs, and changes and movement. She isn't used to roughing it much, poor dear!”—[here a great drop blots the paper]—“and will want some one who knows how to take care of her as well as to love her.

“Captain Garth has a loud, firm voice, and seems, I think, to have a very decided character; but this is certainly quite an advantage, and pro-

bably after all, only his military way, to which I am not yet used. They are gone to Scarborough for a fortnight, his leave, at present, not extending beyond that time, and then they are to join the regiment, which is stationed at York.

"The breakfast went off capitally. There were a number of toasts and speeches : Philip spoke quite beautifully, as he always does ; at least he began beautifully—saying what an honour he thought it for his daughter to be the wife of a brave man ; but when, as he went on, he touched upon all the vicissitudes of a soldier's life, the hardships and the dangers—and often the long years of exile in distant lands—a thought of all our poor Susie might be exposed to—she who has been so petted and fostered, and kept in cotton all her life—came across him, and he suddenly got as white as a sheet, and could not go on ; and poor Susie, who had kept up wonderfully till then, burst into tears, and jumped up from table, and ran into his arms. I was afraid Captain Garth might be hurt, for he coloured scarlet, and said not a single word. However, uncle James was there, and saved us all ; for he got up and made a first-rate speech, full of puns, which set all the girls laughing, and so we ended better than we began.

"You were not forgotten at the breakfast, dear Joe. 'Absent friends' were drunk, and then Susie put another drop of wine into her glass, and added, 'And here's dear Joe, and God bless him !' My dear boy, I hope that by-and-by it may be a pleasure and comfort to you to remember this little word. Philip and Susie were both very anxious to have you up for the wedding ; but I thought that perhaps you would not care to come to us just then, and said I thought your own people must be wanting you themselves after having been so long without you. I hope you have not been vexed at not hearing from us before, but I thought it better not to write till all was over.

Your truly attached friend,

SARAH WARDE.

And so I burned the white rose she had stuck into my button-hole one day when we had gone to a picnic in Greenwich Park, and the bit of mistletoe under which I had kissed her last Christmas, when we both blushed for the first time, and I felt with a rush of blood to my heart that she had suddenly—all in a single instant—become Eve to me. And I went to my father and told him I had finally made up my mind to give up the church and take to tutoring ; which would at once relieve him of much anxiety on my account, and for which on the whole I felt myself a great deal better fitted. The fact was, with the loss of Susannah, all ambition was gone out of me ; I had come to my senses, and with them also to the conclusion that the less trouble I gave now in any way the better.

I first got a very satisfactory situation in Cornwall, where I remained

for about two years, and then spent the next three years in the family of an Irish gentleman who lived not far from the lovely lake of Killarney. After which I heard of what seemed likely to prove a very good thing if I did not mind India; and feeling that an entire change was the only thing likely to shake me out of a state of despondency and discouragement that was becoming too habitual with me, I made up my mind to close with the offer which had been made me.

It was a great shock to the people at the parsonage when I announced my intention to them. But, after all, I had already been away three years in Ireland without ever coming home; this was to be an absence of only five or six—(alas! it became one of five-and-twenty; but at the moment of our decision this was little anticipated)—and the remuneration, which was most liberal and to be increased with time, would allow of my sending home annually a considerable sum of money to be devoted to the education of my brothers.

My favourite sister, Mary, was at this time about to become a governess: she was admirably gifted for this career, and had been brought up with a view to it. She knew French fundamentally, though of course she could not speak it: she was, thanks to my father, a very good Latin scholar; and thanks to her own industry and passion for music, a fair performer on the pianoforte. Our instrument was but a poor one, having belonged to my mother when she was a girl—she brought it with her to the parsonage when she married my father, and with it her old music-books, a few odd volumes of Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart—it was all old-fashioned together, but we owed to it some of the happiest moments of our lives.

After failing in one or two attempts to procure a situation for her, one now offered which seemed to promise very favourably; but the money for her outfit, slender as that was, was not forthcoming just when it was wanted, and could only be got together by keeping the boys at home and on my mother's hands for another year. Now they had long been of an age to go to school; but though very good-hearted boys, it was not in the nature of their youth and vigorous temperament not to be somewhat unruly and noisy, and my poor mother, who at her best had never been very strong, had broken down a great deal in the last years, and stood much in need of a rest and quiet that she seemed but little likely in this life to obtain. My Indian project turning up just at this juncture, solved many of these difficulties in an unlooked-for way, and reconciled us all more or less to the pang of parting.

One day, not long before my departure, as I was running along Bond Street in quest of portmanteaus and hat-boxes, I ran up against a fine, tall, stout young fellow, who, taking hold of me by both shoulders, called out, "Why, hulloa, old fellow, where are you cutting to in such a hurry?" It was little Winterton grown out of all his illnesses and ailments into this magnificent specimen of a man. He was going home to luncheon, and

insisted on carrying me along with him to Portman Square. We found his mother at table with a bevy of charming young ladies, to whom I was in turn presented. There was Lady Mary, with her silvery voice and delicate skin; and Lady Caroline, straight and tall, and with something of a will of her own or I am much mistaken. But indeed I could hardly look at anybody for a vision of loveliness that seemed to brighten the whole room, and that came up to me with a sweet graciousness and a sunny face all dimpling with tender smiles, and holding out both her little hands, said, "How good you were to George! I'm sure he must have talked to you about me—I'm Jane."

Sitting at table with them, drinking porter and eating voraciously, was a stout elderly foreign gentleman with a smooth face and great animation of manner. This was Signor Donzelli, a very famous Italian tenor singer, who had formerly given lessons to the young ladies, and who was only for a few days in England. After luncheon we went upstairs, and Lady Jane and Lady Caroline dragged him to the piano and insisted on his singing. After many entreaties and protestations on one side and the other, he began his most celebrated air out of Rossini's *Otello*, "Ah si per voi già sento," but he broke down in the middle, burst out laughing, and seizing them by the hand, exclaimed, "C'est impossible! vous êtes deux charmantes filles, mais je ne puis pas chanter—je suis trop plein!"

He appeared to have little or no execution, but it was one of the noblest voices I ever heard: a manly, robust, sonorous, low tenor, more like the very high baritones of the present day than anything else. He afterwards sang two or three bits of recitative, which were much finer than the song, which had a little wanted finish, and was rather too uniformly loud to my thinking. The best of all was one that began with the words, "Svanir le voci," and which they told me was out of an opera called *Norma*, by Bellini. It was a grand piece of declamation: I never heard so perfect an enunciation; not a word was lost, and the separate syllables beat singly upon the ear like so many distinct musical blows.

When I took my leave, they told me they were going to have some music in the evening, and begged me to come and hear it. I inquired if Signor Donzelli was to sing. "Oh, no," said Lady Jane. "Ours is only an amateur performance, and Mr. Rivers don't like his singing; he says he bawls too much, and that it is insufferable in a room. You will hear Mr. Rivers to-night. We have no less than four tenors, all so jealous of one another!—Mr. Endersleigh, Mr. Frank Rivers, Mr. Cholmondely, and Lord Manvers; but Mr. Rivers is the best, and we are going to sing a quantity of things he has brought with him from Italy."

As the clock struck ten, I presented myself in Portman Square, and found myself the only man among the ladies, for the guests had not yet begun to arrive, and the gentlemen had not left the dinner-table. The ladies received me very kindly, but I never was more uncomfortable in

my life; I felt so thoroughly in the way, and a fish out of water. There were no subjects of common interest between us—how should there be? Of their habits I knew nothing, and what experience could they possibly have of a life hidden away in the shade like mine? We had exhausted George's health at luncheon, and upon the only topic upon which we could converse—music—I soon found that we did not agree; my early taste had been formed upon the masters almost exclusively cultivated in my own home—Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, and old Corelli—but with these I found my new friends but little acquainted, although they unhesitatingly pronounced them to be dull and tiresome. I then thought I would try a lighter style, and spoke of Purcell and Dr. Arne, but here I was hardly more successful. Of these composers they were entirely ignorant. I, in my turn, knew nothing whatever of Rossini and the Italian music they delighted in, and so conversation very soon began to flag, and to be filled with a gradually rising tide of awkward pauses. What made me feel still more embarrassed was the presence of a lady with whom I was not acquainted. I never saw anything more striking than this lady's appearance. She was a beautiful woman of apparently about six- or seven-and-twenty, tall and slight, and with a handsome figure. She had a remarkably small, well-shaped head, with dark hair, eyes, and a wonderful white complexion, with just the very faintest tinge of colour exactly in the right place. I remarked this with admiration to Lady Mary, who replied in her sugary voice and with an odd little laugh, "Yes; she always puts it in the right place, don't she?" Her dress was very peculiar, and added to the picturesqueness and brilliancy of her appearance. She wore a scarlet velvet gown and a magnificent white rose in her bosom.

This person, my dear Lady Jane told me, was one of her cousins, Lady Charlotte Malcolm, or I never could have believed they could have belonged to the same family, she looked so dreadfully hard and bold; and she certainly had none of their good breeding or good nature, for having, when I came in first, asked, in so loud a whisper that I couldn't but hear her, who I was, and then remarked that I was a good-looking beast, she declined having me presented to her, and took no further notice of me whatever, beyond putting up her horrid eyeglass at me and giggling upon every observation I addressed to other people; each time she did so, making me grow as red as the colour of her own gown. Before the people came, I was taken through the rooms by Lady Caroline and Lady Jane. I think they were rather ashamed of their cousin's bad manners, and very good-naturedly made this an excuse for getting me out of her reach.

This evening in Portman Square was altogether a revelation to me. In the first place I had never seen any house at all like it. I had been living exiled in a very desolate sort of barracky ruin in Ireland for the last few years, and almost the only civilized social recollections I had were

of the dear old house in Bloomsbury; but this was a very different matter in every respect.

In Bloomsbury we had one good-sized drawing-room, opening with low narrow yellow folding doors into a back room a good deal smaller. The variety of arrangement, and the quantity of furniture in Portman Square, made it a matter of some anxiety to steer one's way clear on any side. In Bloomsbury we used to have no difficulties of this sort to struggle with: the pianoforte stood against the wall in one room, and a hard little sofa, with a shaped back and scroll end, against the wall in the other: there were only two arm-chairs in each room, and these stood symmetrically on either side the fire-place. In the centre of both rooms was a round table: that in the front drawing-room had a cloth cover of light green stamped with black upon it; the table in the back room had no cloth: it was of dark mahogany, and overspread with pretty little knick-knacks in Bohemian glass and Tunbridge ware. In this room the paper was a rich buff flock; but the paper in the front room was the one I used to admire the most: it had a bright pink ground, with a pattern something between a cathedral window and a gridiron done in gold all over it. How well I recollect the day it was put up, and how splendid I thought it looked when the great glass chandelier was lighted, to try the effect! Miss Bird, the governess, was sent for, with little Ursula, from the school-room, to come and see it; and I remember as if it were yesterday, how she stood before it in her plum-coloured gown, with her red muffedettes and her chilblainy hands clasped, exclaiming rapturously over and over again, "And such a lovely *idea*, isn't it?" as if that was a charm entirely separate from the paper, and the one she chiefly appreciated.

There were four drawing-rooms in Portman Square—two immense middle ones of grand proportions, with white and gold walls and gorgeous crimson curtains. These were brilliantly lit all round with wax candles, and the pianoforte stood quite out at the end of the largest room of the two. Leading out of this apartment, behind the head of the piano, was what was called the young ladies' study. This was hung with pale sea-green satin of an exquisitely delicate shade. It would be impossible for me to describe it in detail; but I remember that the sofas and chairs—which were of all shapes and sizes, some Liliputian, some Brobdingnagian—were covered with garlands of roses in soft old tapestry-work, which had preserved the liveliest and freshest tints. Against the walls were two cabinets of ebony inlaid with ivory, and over these hung two noble Sir Joshuas, portraits of ladies of the family. There were also three or four beautiful drawings of Lawrence's, and some charming water-colours by Copley, Fielding, and De Wint. The room that was at the other end of the suite, was of circular form, hung with silver grey velvet, and contained about half-a-dozen first-rate Vandykes. The curtains here were of a deep violet colour, and the furniture, which I admired very much, they told me

was old French. There were beautiful inlaid secrétaires, costly bureaux of quaint shape, and at one end a gorgeous old French writing-table, and everywhere, by each luxurious sofa or inviting arm-chair, little inlaid tables of green and brown woods, of the most exquisite forms and workmanship. It was altogether quite different from Bloomsbury, and on the whole, certainly much prettier.

When once the guests began to arrive, they continued pouring in very quickly, and the rooms were soon filled to suffocation. I was very curious to see Mr. Rivers, whose name was mentioned among them every five minutes—his opinions quoted, and his authority appealed to. It was evident he must be a very important and fashionable person, and I thought he must be some great lord's son at least; but I found to my surprise that, although he was connected with almost all the noble families of England, he held no rank whatever himself; he was not even an Honourable. I felt sure I should know him at once, either by his supremely dandified appearance, or by his superior good looks, although how he was to be handsomer than the men who were already there it was difficult to imagine. For I do not think I ever was so struck with anything as I was with the general beauty of this assembly—both men and women seemed like creatures of another world to me. Now we had only one other pretty girl besides Susannah Warde in Bloomsbury—Georgina Battersby, her great friend—and I could not help thinking how dowdy and insignificant she would have looked among these people.

There was one whole family of three sisters and two brothers, who, when they came in, quite took away my breath with the splendour of their appearance. Mrs. Wentworth, with her classical head and straight nose, made one think of "The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece, where burning Sappho loved and sung." Indeed she might have been Sappho herself, for they told me she was a genius as well as a beauty. Her youngest brother, who was not more than nineteen or twenty years old, was without exception the most radiant human creature I ever beheld. Without being at all unmanly or effeminate, he was as lovely as a woman, and had the voice and smile of an angel: one wondered what this glorious young Greek god was doing, so far away from Olympus.

Then there was cream-coloured Mrs. Henry Wharton, beautiful from "her melancholy eyes divine, the home of woe without a tear," down to the sole of her foot. I never saw anything to equal the shape and colour of her hands, arms, and bust; but I felt nervously ashamed of looking much her way, her clothing having for the most part resumed itself into a bunch of violets. I mention these merely as some of the most remarkable persons that I saw, for I stood near the door, and I declare that almost every one who came in was handsome, or at least well-looking: all were well grown and had fine skins.

"My dears, hadn't you better begin?" said Lady Winterton, coming up to where I was sitting with her daughters.

"Mr. Rivers isn't come yet, mamma, and we want him for 'Cielo il mio labbro,'" answered Lady Jane.

"Never mind, my dears. It's past eleven o'clock, and you had better begin with something else," returned her mother.

"Oh, we can't indeed, mamma," said Lady Jane anxiously, adding suddenly, "Oh! there he is—I see him!" as a tall, fair man, with light hair and auburn whiskers, perfectly simply dressed, and carrying a heap of music in his arms, fought his way vigorously up the stairs. He was certainly very good-looking, but that was not what struck me most about him. It was his bright countenance, his air of distinction, and when he spoke the pleasant voice and charm of entire unaffectedness that were so winning.

"Did you ever see such a crowd?" said Lady Winterton, as he wished her good evening.

"Yes, and all standing about, so as to prevent one's being able to stir; so English that is! My dear Lady Winterton, half of it is your fault, because you always will stick tables before your sofas. Just look at that row of people all standing with their backs to the table, instead of getting in and being quiet, and making room for others. It really must be moved—you lose more than half your space that way. Would you mind——?" he said, looking at me, and in two minutes we had got the obnoxious piece of furniture out of the way against a wall, and four ladies were instantly seated on the hitherto untenanted sofa. Mr. Rivers was so pleased with this result, that he made me go round with him and remove all the other tables. It really was an immense improvement, although I must own I felt rather nervous as we approached one at which three or four elderly ladies and gentlemen were seated, looking over some political caricatures and reviews.

"I'm afraid," said I, hesitatingly, to Mr. Rivers, "we shan't be able"—— but——

"We're going to push that table up into the corner, if you don't mind," said he, briskly, lifting the lamp and making off with it as he spoke, leaving the people he addressed in benighted amazement.

"It'll be much better there, won't it?" he said with a smile, as he came back for the table.

One cross-looking old woman, who was not at all inclined to be pleased, wagged her head angrily at him and said, "I was reading, and I don't think so."

"Oh, yes, you do," he replied, with that delightful smile of his. "Besides, you don't want your book now, you know; you're going to listen to us." And he rolled the table away as he spoke.

Our programme consisted of the following pieces, with none of which I was acquainted:—

"Cielo il mio labbro"—a quartett from Rossini's *Bianca e Faliero*, pompous, splendid, and well sung. "Tu vedrai la sventurata"—an air

from the *Pirata*, by Bellini. This was sung by Mr. Endersleigh very carefully, but rather through his nose: it was of those good things that do not give one much pleasure. Then came a duet from the same opera, sung by Mr. Rivers and Lady Caroline. They both had very fine voices (he, a brilliant high tenor, and she soprano,) and a degree of cultivation that was quite remarkable.

Mr. Rivers was very nervous and fidgety at first; the person who was to have accompanied the duet, for some reason that I could not catch, did not please him, and he declared he would not sing unless some one else could be got to play. This alteration was with a little difficulty at last effected.

"Do, for heaven's sake, let us begin: these pauses ruin a concert," he said, exactly as if the delay had been caused by some one else instead of himself. "I never saw such a horrid public in all my life—all women! It's quite killing to have to sing to people who won't ever express anything. Do applaud, there's a dear good man" (this to me). "I give you my word my mouth's exactly like a clothes-brush! Mind you play my notes," was his parting injunction to the accompanier, and they started. But he suddenly caught sight of Lady Charlotte Malcolm, who was talking and laughing loud in the front row; and leaving Lady Caroline with her mouth wide open, singing her solo, he exclaimed, "It's quite impossible to do anything serious with that dreadful giggling going on just opposite one;" with which observation he went straight across to her, and an animated little interview took place between them, in which I could just catch the words, "Want to converse—boudoir—disturb other people." She would not move, but she held her tongue afterwards, at least whenever Mr. Rivers sang, which I was very glad of, for she had talked incessantly all through poor Mr. Endersleigh's air.

This duet of the *Pirata* appeared to me to be rather a poor and disjointed composition, with some pretty melodious phrases spotted about here and there over it. I make no doubt it would have been far more effective on the stage, for the words and situation were evidently very dramatic. Not understanding Italian, I didn't of course know what it was about, but it was obviously a desperate love-duet, and highly tragic. Frank Rivers sang it with immense expression, and turned round to me repeatedly with a countenance beaming with delight, to which his remark of "Ain't it so miserable?" made a very comical contrast. After this Mr. Cholmondely sang, "A te, o cara," from the opera of the *Puritani*. He had a pretty voice, but I confess I wondered at his self-confidence, for he had not the slightest idea of time; and the accompanier, and those who sang with him, had hard work to follow him. It was a horrid massacre of what appeared to me a charming thing: but many of the ladies seemed enchanted, and so did he himself; and one gentleman came up to me and remarked, "It's better than Rubini; and it's all by ear—he doesn't know a note of music!"

"So I should have imagined," I began to reply, when Lady Jane gave me a nervous little push, and in a low voice imparted to me the information that I was speaking to Mr. William Cholmondely, the younger brother of the gentleman who had just performed.

We then had a duet between Lady Caroline and Lady Jane. This was called "Ebben per mia memoria," and was from Rossini's opera of the *Gazza Ladra*. It was sung with feeling, style, and excellent execution, and was altogether more like the work of artists than of amateurs. Lady Jane had a charming mezzo-soprano voice, her sister a brilliant and powerful soprano; and they understood each other's feeling and manner so well, that their singing together went with the precision of a single voice. After this, Lord Manvers, a young nobleman with lovely eyes, sat down to accompany himself. Of his performance I really was unable to judge, for he executed nothing in its entirety: he did nothing but warble, with a very sweet voice, little melodious beginnings and endings, and I believe he would have been there to this very hour, exciting the black ire of the other tenors, but for Frank Rivers, who at last, in that irresistible way of his, broke in with, "My dear fellow, sing, or get up; we shall be charmed if you will really sing any one thing through, but if you can't or won't, you'd better get up and let us go on. That kind o' thing is so tiresome, and we shan't get through the programme to-night."

After this came a fine thing out of Rossini's *Tancredi*, beginning with "M'abbraccia Argirio." This was capitally sung, on the whole, by a Mrs. Harley and Mr. Endersleigh: he, as before, a little melancholy and nasal; but the lady had fire enough for two. She had been a pupil of Pasta's, and declaimed heroically with a husky mezzo-soprano voice. The duet was succeeded by Bellini's romance of "Ah non creder che pieno," from the *Beatrice di Tenda*—a thing requiring the most perfect finish, which it received at the hands of Mrs. Wilmot, who dropped diamonds and pearls of notes without seeming even to take the trouble to open her mouth. And then we wound up with another frantic love-duet of Donizetti's, by Mr. Rivers and Lady Caroline. This was indeed a most desperate business; Frank Rivers worked himself into a terrible state over it, and again seemed quite enchanted with the misery of the sentiments he was expressing, several times ejaculating at intervals, "O Parisina!" in an agony of grief, and then turning his bright face round to us with an ecstatic smile, and exclaiming, in tones of indescribable comfort, "So wretched, ain't it?"

On the whole, the Rossini music was much the finest of all I heard: it was more shapely and dignified than the rest, and although, in apparent obedience to some Italian canon of operatic form, it stuck on a quick movement at the end of every slow one, there was an expression and character about it which I found wanting in the other composers, whose last movements were almost all trivial and commonplace.

When every one was gone, with the exception of the performers and

myself, we all adjourned to the round room, where a charming supper-table, covered with flowers and fruits, was prepared, and where we all sat down in wild spirits to talk over the concert and the events of the evening. I may say that I had quite an unexpected little success here, for upon Lady Jane's speaking of her cousin's insolent airs, and suddenly saying, "If one planted Charlotte, what flower would she come up?" I, who had often played at this child's game at home, and who had not quite forgiven Lady Charlotte for refusing before my face to be introduced to me, called out at once from the other end of the table, "London Pride!" which was received with general acclamation.

"And what would Jane come up?" asked Lady Caroline.

"Morning-glory," said I, as quick as light, looking at the fair young head opposite to me, crowned with its masses of golden hair: this was also much applauded. But the best of all was when Mr. Cholmondely said,—

"And if one planted Frank Rivers, what would he come up?"

"Love-lies-bleeding," said Lord Manvers.

"No, no," cried I, mindful of the "O Parisina!" and all the other agonies: "Love-and-tear-it!"—the name of the country-folk down in our part of the world for that mildest and most innocent of vegetable creatures, the mallow. The instant after I had said it I was afraid Mr. Rivers might be offended with my freedom; but no one laughed more, and he several times said, "So quick of him, so very droll," with the greatest good-nature and with evident enjoyment of the joke.

One more musical treat, and that the greatest, I have to record before my departure for India. This was at the house of Mr. John Grahame, one of our great city merchants, who was nevertheless content to reside in the city. I was invited to spend my last evening with them, and here I heard the glorious music of the *Don Juan* executed from beginning to end with the utmost reverence and care. An able professional man and excellent pianist, the master of the young ladies, accompanied it at the pianoforte. Don Juan was admirably sung by a Mr. Hepworth, a lawyer; Donna Anna was a professional singer engaged for the occasion; Donna Elvira, a young German lady, with a magnificent voice, a niece of my host, on a short visit to England; the youngest daughter of the house was the Zerlina, and sang her "Batti, batti," charmingly, accompanied quite capitally on the violoncello by an old admiral, an enthusiastic lover of classical music; the master of the house, who had a fine bass voice and great sense of humour, was our Leporello. Between the acts, Mozart's third sonata in F—the king of sonatas for four hands—was executed by the two eldest daughters of the house to perfection. This was the last music, deserving of the name, that I heard for five-and-twenty years.

I had gone out as a tutor to India, but in process of time I became acquainted with the head of a large mercantile house there, who recommended me to try business, and made an opening for me in his own

establishment. And there I remained, getting on in the world as it is called; but alas, for what? I ask myself this question sadly enough now that it is too late.

The first news of importance that I received from home was that of my sister Anna's marriage to a curate who came to do duty for a short time in a neighbouring parish. He was a widower with seven little children, but Anna wished it, and so an unwilling consent was wrung from my parents. Then followed closely the tidings of my poor mother's death; this was a heavy blow, and one that I hardly like to speak of even now. Some time after this my brother Walter wrote to inform me of his marriage and departure for Australia, where he was soon joined by my youngest brother Fred. Finally came the announcement of my father's decease from my poor sister Mary, who had been living at home with him and keeping house for him ever since he had become a widower. Her letter was a very pathetic appeal to me to come back to her: she was broken in health, pinched in circumstances, and quite alone in the world; and so I determined to return to England, to settle down in some quiet little home in the country, and devote the remainder of my life to my poor Mary, the dear companion of my early years.

At Calcutta I saw Susannah Warde again. She had been for the last twelve years in India, but we had never met. She had still the same sweet smile, but she was dreadfully altered. So much so, that if I had not heard her speak, and seen her smile, I don't think I should have known her again. She had suffered terribly from the climate, which was also telling severely upon her youngest child, a despotic, lead-coloured little urchin of about ten years old. She could not be persuaded to leave her husband and go to England herself, but was full of care and trouble about the boy, and exceedingly anxious to send him over to Europe for his health and education; and so it ended in my volunteering to take charge of him for her. Out of which arrangement, if any one thinks that I got any sort of satisfaction of a sentimental kind, I beg to state he is entirely mistaken: for the child has absolutely nothing of my dear old love Susannah; he is the living image of Knockham Garth; he has the same hard voice, and the "military manner" that poor Mrs. Warde had never got used to.

Almost the first person I looked up in London was Lord Winterton. I found him an elderly bachelor, a martyr to gout, and obliged to go about in a wheel chair. He was delighted to see me, as cordial and friendly as ever, and he asked Mary and me to come and dine with him. Here I met my old friend, Lady Jane, with her radiant face, and the lustre of her golden hair still undimmed by time: if she was no longer Proserpine, she was Ceres still, and she made me acquainted with another Jane, whom I might have taken to be the same I had left in England five-and-twenty years ago, so perfect a likeness of her lovely mother was this lovely daughter. Lady Jane was a widow; she had married a Mr. Trevor

who had died, leaving her with this girl and a boy, and she now resided entirely with her brother, Lord Winterton.

During the course of the evening I talked over with Winterton my project of finding some modest little country home in which to settle down with Mary, and early the very next morning I received from him the offer of a charming little cottage quite close to his own fine place in Cornwall. The rent and taxes altogether only came to eighty-four pounds a year, and it is furnished, and has six bedrooms, so we shall always have a spare room for a friend, even while Knockham remains in our charge.

The few days I spent in town at this period were again chiefly devoted to music, of which I was naturally anxious to secure as much as I could, after having been so long deprived of it.

I went to the Italian Opera to hear Mozart's enchanting *Nozze di Figaro*. The house was very poorly attended, the stalls and boxes having only a thin sprinkling of people here and there. The music was sung with shameful carelessness, and the actors did not seem to think it worth while to give themselves the trouble to move. I was quite indignant at this disgraceful indifference; but was afterwards told that the Italians hate Mozart's music, which they consider tiresome and ineffective, and that also, in a general way, they seldom take the pains to exert themselves when the house is not full.

To make up for this disappointment, Winterton gave me a place in his box a night or two afterwards, to hear an opera which I was told was one of the great works of modern times. I remembered very distinctly the Italian music I had heard years ago—the brilliant effects and grand finish of Rossini, the agreeable vein of melody, somewhat poorly worked out, but always charming in sentiment, of Bellini—and I hoped to have all these delightful old recollections delightfully revived. I declare that, from beginning to end, it was one continual bang and shriek: such tune as there was, was of the very commonest order, and as for the story, it defied all comprehension, and beggars all description. I only know that there was a husband and wife who bawled a hideous duet at each other, with the veins in their throats swollen till I thought they would burst, and their eyes starting out of their heads at their own screams—and a mother who bawled because she had wanted to burn somebody else's baby, and then by a very unaccountable mistake had put her own baby on the fire instead; and then there was a man with the most extraordinary lungs I ever heard, who bawled for an hour together at the same pitch because his mother was going to be burned. Possibly there might be a degree of justification in the general unpleasantness of their positions; but then I ask, why choose fire for the libretto of an opera? There was at last a moment's respite in a commonplace but rather agreeable little duet towards the conclusion, where the lady who has burned the children goes to sleep, and therefore is obliged to cease bawling for a few seconds; and there were two pretty romances sung in lucid intervals by the tenor, one

at the beginning, and the other at the end when he is shut up in a tower. But, on the whole, the performance seemed to me very like the idiot's story, "full of sound and fury, and signifying nothing."

Upon consulting the play-bills, I found that for the remainder of the week no music was to be given except by the same composer, so this was my last operatic experience. But I had no reason to complain of any dearth of musical entertainment, for before I left town, far from desiring to seek it, at last my only aspiration became how to escape it. At every house I went to, it was served up as regularly in the evening as the dessert was after dinner, and my life in the morning was made a burden to me between street-singers, German bands, organ-players, and young ladies practising. I could not even pay my little bill at the news-vendor's without hearing the pianoforte going in the back shop.

Of the music I heard in society, what shall I say? Lady Jane Trevor procured me an invitation for a very fashionable morning concert at the house of one of her friends. Here, standing for two whole hours imbedded, imbrued, and suffocated in ladies' skirts, I heard chorus after chorus sung. The selection in itself was not a very good one, and the execution naturally imperfect enough: for how are twenty or thirty young folks to find time during a frantic London season to rehearse sufficiently often to make their singing together a really satisfactory musical performance? I myself heard the daughter of the house trying to persuade a young friend to join the ranks.

"Do come, dear, we want you so badly."

"But, dear, I don't know the chorus—I have never even looked at it," objected the young lady addressed.

"Never mind, dear," replied the other, "it will be one more voice, and we are so short of sopranos."

It was one more voice, and a great many more false notes. The solos and duets were all rather audacious; the young gentlemen had ears; at least, I was told of all of them that they sang by ear (which may be a wonder, but is not always a grace), and the young ladies had voices, and with these two elementary qualifications they apparently thought themselves quite warranted in standing up to sing operatic music which it would have taxed even professional singers to accomplish well. They all imitated the public performers of the day, and roared within an inch of their lives; it was a very different matter, both as regards art and culture, to the amateur music I remembered twenty-five years ago. Mrs. Horton, the great performer of the occasion, lovely to look upon, and possessing, moreover, the gift of a magnificent voice, amused herself with singing one ballad for all the world like a ventriloquist, it was so absurdly and unnaturally piano, and then singing another the whole way through at full stretch, so inexorably loud that one felt positively battered by the notes, which came about one's ears pelting one like a storm of round white billiard balls. Every one seemed enchanted with it, but I confess that t

me it appeared simply ridiculous. Lady Jane leaned across and whispered to me, laughing, "I think we did it better in my day," and I heartily agreed with her.

The only thing that gave me any real pleasure was the performance of a lady with a perfect glory of fair hair, who sat down to the piano and accompanied herself in one of Beethoven's sacred songs. The music was grand, and she sang it admirably. I asked one of my neighbours who she was: "Christian Rupert—Mrs. Rupert,"—was the answer. "Hasn't she a lovely voice? But it is such a pity she always will sing such tiresome things."

"Too beautiful!" said an enthusiastic lady on the other side. "Mendlesham, isn't it? I do dote upon Mendlesham, don't you? I always say Verdi and Mendlesham—Verdi and Mendlesham—nothing like 'em!"

After every one was gone, little Miss White, whose delicate thread of sound had been entirely swamped in a duet she had sung with a very violent dark gentleman with a tremendous bass voice, was persuaded to let us hear her again, or indeed, as might be said with more justice, to let us hear her for the first time, for before she had literally only been seen to sing. She accompanied herself in a number of little romances which were quite charming—the greatest merit of all being that she understood her own means thoroughly, and never attempted what she could not do to perfection. There was not much passion, but I declare this absence had become an absolute relief to me, and although the voice was rather thin in quality it had plenty of accent, great *sentiment*, and the most exquisite finish. Mrs. Rupert and herself were the only real artists I heard, and the former is, more's the pity, not to be heard often; she lives out of town, and therefore is not counted among the regular well-known London musical amateurs. I could not help remembering the affluence of other days. Lady Jane, Lady Caroline, Mrs. Harley, and Mrs. Wilmot—all first-rate, and all habitually singing music that very few professional singers of the present day are at all able to cope with. The same evening, having been invited very kindly to tea by my banker's wife, I had the gratification of hearing her daughter sing, first, the well-known tenor song of "Marta, Marta," from Flotow's opera of the same name, which she had, unfortunately, found some means of adapting to her own voice, and then, "Non ti scordar di me," the romance of the man in the tower, and then a friend of hers, with a fine contralto voice, gave us "Il balen," the bass song out of the same opera. After these three pieces, I made a futile attempt to depart, but was nailed by the mistress of the house, who would mount guard over the door and kept her eye well upon me, and I was condemned to come back again and listen to what was called a duet—accompanied on the piano by the daughter of the house, and performed, I cannot call it sung, between Miss Whickers, and her own concertina, which took what ought to have been the part sung by the tenor voice. Nothing can ever come up to the extraordinary effect

produced by this singular entertainment. Miss Whickers was a middle-aged young lady of fervid temperament, with a short thin eager figure, and a very long red nose; and what with her own passionate adjurations rendered even more irresistibly comical by her personal appearance, and the heartless, dumb responses, always a little out of time and never quite in tune, of the concertina, with which apparently, without any rhyme or reason, she would suddenly begin to play an ecstatic sort of game at pitch and toss, I was worked into such a state of nervousness by the ludicrousness of the spectacle that I felt at last as if I must have given way to some extraordinary manifestation or other: dashed down the piano—or flown at the concertina—or kissed Miss Whickers. At the conclusion, while my hostess was for an instant engaged with thanks and applause, I contrived at last to slip out, and as I hurried down, whom should I meet upon the stairs but my old acquaintance Mr. Hepworth. He was grown very old indeed, but he had a marked, peculiar face, and I knew him again at once. I inquired if he had kept his voice and still sang.

"Well, no," he said; "my boys don't care much for my music, they think it old-fashioned and dull."

"Have any of them inherited your fine voice?" said I; "are they at all musical?"

"Yes," he replied, "the eldest plays waltzes on the cornet-a-piston, and the youngest sings the Christy Minstrel melodies, and accompanies himself on the bones. He does it everywhere; he's going to do it here to-night: he's doing it at this very moment at another musical party—that's why he's late; but he'll be doing it here in five minutes. I'm so sorry you won't hear him." I couldn't echo the sentiment, but hastily bade him good-night, and thanked my stars for my escape.

During these ten days in town I seemed to be living in a chronic state of musical burlesque; for after having been stunned and deafened one day by hearing choruses sung in a space for which they never were intended, and were quite unfit, I went on another to an enormous public room to hear trios and quatuors of Beethoven's and Mozart's, led by the unrivalled Joachim, and some of Beethoven's sonatas played with exquisite delicacy and feeling by Hallé, who, having devoted himself principally to this order of music, executes it to perfection. The public was essentially a non-fashionable one, and, on the whole, behaved and listened very well. But the want of concentration, which is absolutely essential to the perfect enjoyment of this music, called especially *musica di camera*—*chamber music*—made itself painfully felt in this great public hall. How I longed for a magician's wand to make the unwelcome crowd vanish, and to find myself listening to these great men and their great interpreters, comfortably seated in a small space, with about a dozen intimate friends, all animated with the same love and reverence for these heavenly compositions, where the proportions of the room would allow the forte passages really to appear loud, instead of falling feebly and thinly into unlimited

space, and where the more delicate and tender inspirations would receive their full value and charm, and be felt profoundly and mesmerically by an assembly consisting only of a chosen few, all tuned to the proper pitch of acute sensibility: this fine delight in the hearts of all, a subtle atmosphere most propitious to the best efforts of the artists themselves, who, undisturbed by the banging of doors, the audible whispers about places, and the prosaic rustle of non-conducting silks, would give back a hundred-fold what they received.

The fact is, that although this divine art is so generally cultivated, and apparently so much enjoyed, in reality it is neither properly appreciated nor sufficiently revered in England; in order that it should be so, an early apprenticeship to the highest class of music is absolutely necessary.

If I were the father of a family all the members of it should learn music. Almost all children have naturally good ears, and can catch tunes easily; and, strange to say, they are able to master the mysteries of time much better at an early age than they do later. Both girls and boys should be taught to play upon the pianoforte; which, although it wants the power of melting one sound into another—that touching human effect that some other instruments possess—is invaluable as bringing almost every variety of music within reach, and permitting one, through arrangements and adaptations, to become acquainted to a certain degree with nearly all the thoughts of the greatest composers. At a more advanced age I would have them learn the grammar of music, thorough-bass and harmony. The knowledge of the principles upon which the greatest men worked, and the examination of the manner in which they worked, would be a study of great interest, and could but add to the admiration with which they were regarded.

Those of my children who might happen to be great musical geniuses would only build the better for building upon such a foundation; and those who were not, having been taught by their early studies what real greatness is, and by the same process to comprehend what real littleness is also, in default of the charm of talent would probably achieve that of modesty, and instead of becoming indifferent executants, would resign themselves to being intelligent and understanding listeners—a race of which the world stands greatly in need. And let no one imagine that this is to be accomplished at an undue cost of time which would be better devoted to other things. Much more time is habitually given to an unsuccessful and incomplete musical education than this would require; good teaching and one hour and a half—no more—of daily practice, made the Miss Grahames the accomplished pianists they were; and the steady reading of one single line of new music every day would very soon secure to any one who chose the invaluable power of playing with facility at sight.

When musical education is conducted upon these principles, we shall no longer have music fit only for the theatre brought into our drawing-

rooms, and our delicate drawing-room music exiled to places for which it is entirely unsuited. The effeminate slothfulness which makes people content to go on having their ears tickled by the old, beaten, worn-out forms from which such life as they ever possessed has long since departed, and leads them to seek those gratifications which make the least possible demand upon their own intelligence, will give way to the wholesome desire of a nobler pleasure at a nobler price, and they will gradually become willing to give of their best to the right understanding of the works of great men. Our musical entertainments would also undergo a considerable revolution in the matter of their duration; in proportion as they grew purer in quality, they would inevitably become curtailed in quantity; for it would be simply a moral and physical impossibility to give of one's best for the same number of consecutive hours that are now consecrated to a something—I will not call it music—which appeals to not one of the higher faculties of our organization.

So, by degrees, our desire to feel and understand would bring with it its own reward, in a fruition of understanding and feeling, daily growing broader, deeper, and finer, until we could not fail to reach at last the most healthy of all musical and moral conditions—that in which we shall love most the thing which is best. Now to love anything sincerely is an act of grace, but to love the best sincerely is a state of grace. We cannot, however, hope to attain to these serene heights without considerable and consistent exertion of our own, for it is undoubtedly with the muscles of our minds as it is with those of our bodies; the healthful exercise of them doubles their strength, while those that are not used as they were given to be used, gradually wither away into premature impotence. "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath." A saying, the eternal wisdom of which is as universal as it is eternal, and which, if true as regards our worldly possessions, is yet more profoundly so as regards the precious faculties of our souls.

The Old Showman.

THE days of fairs are numbered; Bartlemy, "first and chiefest," has been abolished long since, and the glories of Greenwich are no more. Their fate was inevitable, for respectability, decency, was against them. The struggle was fierce and protracted, but the end came at last, and they passed away, bearing with them, let us hope, the spirit of brutal dissipation which used to characterize our English diversions. We have now become genteel in our vices, and think to rob them of half their evil by depriving them of all their grossness. Moreover, as railways increase, they create fresh centres of exchange and commerce, and obviate the necessity for so many of those curious scenes of bartering, cheating, guzzling, and fighting, known as fairs. The custom of statute fairs and wakes still lingers persistently in the Midland and Northern counties, but authority is exercised for their suppression whenever an opportunity occurs.

One of the most regular features of a fair, during the palmy days of the institution, was the theatrical booth, and one of the best known theatrical showmen of modern times was, beyond all question, old John Richardson. From Susarion and Thespis to John Richardson is a long step, and yet the travelling booth of the one was the lineal representative of the moveable stage and cart of the others. So much then for the antiquity and dignity of the showman's profession. Of old Richardson's claims to public notice not the least is that he was the last of a long line, and that with him the race of theatrical showmen may be said to have passed away. His show had an immense reputation in its day, and the old man himself was one of the stock amusements of London. No apology will, therefore, be offered for relating so much as is known of him.

Marlow in Buckinghamshire had the honour of his bringing forth. Whether, as has been suggested, he was related to the author of *Clarissa Harlowe*, because both wore top-boots, we leave to the authorities of the Herald's College. Being at a tender age thrown upon the world by the workhouse of his native place, he made the best of his way to London, and engaged himself as an assistant to a cowkeeper. The exact sum of money which he was possessed of on reaching London is not known, but as he died rich, we may assume that his capital was the twopence halfpenny with which so many millionaires have started. He was soon smitten with the *cacoethes agendi*, and joined the company of a Mrs. Penley, which was then performing at a public-house in Shadwell. One of the Penleys afterwards belonged to the Drury Lane Company, and played "Allworth" in the *New Way to Pay Old Debts*, and such like characters. Richardson's first venture was by no means a success. The receipts were miserably small,

and the company would have been half-starved had they not been able to eke out their earnings by amusing the frequenters of the tap-room. Mrs. Penley's company afterwards played at Chatham and various places, but Richardson seems to have soon got sick of strolling, and to have settled down as a broker in Drury Lane. In this occupation he saved a considerable sum of money, and in 1796 entered on the speculation of taking the Harlequin public-house, near the stage-door of Drury Lane Theatre, which at that time was a great resort for all people concerned in theatrical affairs. The frequenters of his tavern seem in a very short time to have so far influenced his mind as to induce him to leave the "public," and go into the "travelling" line; a description of business which, having once engaged in, he never relinquished during a period of forty years.

The first appearance of "Richardson's Show" was at Bartlemy fair in 1796. At that time the travelling showmen (we speak of theatrical showmen) were simply showmen *et praterea nihil*,—mere common sort of fellows, for whom the vagabond life they led may have been the best fitted. But it would be wrong to suppose that this was always the case, or that, till within a few years before the period we are speaking of, the fact of keeping a theatrical booth was thought degrading by the profession. During the first three-quarters of the last century it was usual for players holding good positions at one or other of the patent theatres to open a booth in Smithfield in Bartlemy fair time. So much was this practice recognized, and so popular were the performances, that the regular theatres used not unfrequently to be closed during this period. Nearly all the proprietors of these booths, from 1700 to 1776, were actors of some celebrity in their particular line, which, it is worthy of remark, was usually low comedy. Among these may be mentioned Doggett, who by his acting contributed so much to the reputation of Farquhar as an author; Penkethman and Bullock, actors of good repute, and favourites with the galleries, although the satirical handling of the *Tatler* must have given them a notoriety which they did not altogether relish; Hippisley, Chapman, Hallam, and Miller, all actors known to fame. The last actors of any celebrity who appeared at Smithfield as rivals to conjurors, fire-eaters, giants, and dwarfs, were Yates and Shuter, as to whose reputation the reader is referred to the *Rosciad*. But greater than all was Henry Fielding. He succeeded to Penkethman's booth, and during the period of his connection with the fair, 1728-1737, he was joint proprietor at different times with Hippisley, Hallam, Reynolds, and Oates. His booth was generally situated in George Inn Yard, and we read in one of his advertisements, "The passage to the booth will be illuminated with several large moons and lanthorns for the conveniency of the passengers, and the coaches of persons of quality may drive up the yard." Sometimes Fielding acted himself with his company, which was generally from the Haymarket. At Fielding and Hippisley's booth, in 1733, the charming and graceful Mrs. Pritchard (who made her *début* as an actress at Bartlemy

fair in 1727) played the part of Loveit, in an opera called *A Cure for Covetousness*; or, *the Cheats of Scapin*.

It was when this generation of showmen had passed away that Richardson made his bow at Smithfield. His stage and theatrical fittings were at first of a very rude character. The first floor of a public-house was turned into a theatre, and the platform or parade, which was fitted up outside the window, formed an arch over the stalls of the sellers of gingerbread nuts and fried fish which stood below. The audience had to reach the theatre by means of a ladder, communicating from the platform to the fair. Twenty-one times a day were the unlucky performers called upon to go through their parts. The audiences were not very fastidious, and so long as they had a broadsword combat and a ghost, the actors were at liberty to play all sorts of tricks with the drama. The length of the performance was indeed usually regulated by the number of people waiting to enter the show. When it was thought that there was a sufficient quantity of visitors outside to form another audience, some one would be sent in to inquire in a loud voice if John Audley were there. This was a signal to the actors to cut the piece short; and to abridge a performance is very commonly called to "John Audley" it. This trick was first practised by Shuter at his booth in 1759. Whatever may have been the cause, it is certain that at first curses loud, deep, and comprehensive as that of Ernulphus, were heard from Richardson's retreating patrons; but it was not long before he installed himself in popular favour. The performances of Bartlemy were repeated at Edmonton and other places, and at the end of the year our showman found himself the possessor of a good sum of money. With this he built himself two or three caravans ("carrywans" was his pronunciation), in which he could convey his company and properties from one place to another. This enterprise, however, proved unfortunate, and Richardson not only lost all his money, but became involved in difficulties. His good luck soon returned to him, and his show became one of the principal features of many of the fairs of the kingdom—Bartlemy and Greenwich being his head-quarters—but it was not until after many years and many hardships that he was enabled to give his show that appearance of splendour which we were accustomed to associate with it in our younger days.

It was during the earlier and less fortunate part of his pilgrimage, that he numbered Edmund Kean among his company. The old showman was not a little proud of this association, and used to give himself some credit for having had a hand in Kean's theatrical education. When Macready's name was becoming known in the dramatic world, Richardson was asked if he had seen him. "No, muster," he said, "I knows nothing about him; in fact, he's some wagabone as no one knows; one of them chaps as ain't had any eddication for the thing; he never was with me, as Edmund Kean and them riglars was." Kean's mother, Mrs. Carey, a descendant of the unfortunate musician, obtained an engagement for herself and her children, Edmund and Henry, in the company of

Richardson, in whose bills Henry Carey's name figured for some years afterwards. The first performance of the family was to take place at Windsor. Between Slough and Eton, however, the caravan came to grief, and stuck fast in the mud. The misfortune being perceived by some Eton boys, they declared they would drag the caravan into the town without horses. Richardson, for various reasons, refused to agree to this, and the boys in revenge pelted the caravan as it passed the college. This, it is believed, is the only foundation for all the stories which have been set afloat concerning Kean's connection with Eton. The performances at Windsor opened with the *Magic Oak* and Fielding's *Tom Thumb*, in which Edmund played the hero, and his mother personated Queen Dollalolla. To his great surprise, Richardson received a note the next day requiring Master Edmund to come up to the Castle, and perform before the King (George III.) Kean's recitations took every one by surprise, and his wondrous ability was even then acknowledged. His mother, taking advantage of the royal favour, engaged the market hall, and reaped a considerable profit from Edmund's exhibition of his talents before the people of Windsor. The family afterwards rejoined Richardson's company, and remained with him for some time. The last time Edmund Kean played for Richardson was at Battersea fair in 1806. He performed "Norval" and also "Motley," in the *Castle Spectre*, receiving a salary of five shillings a night. Kean would often in his freer moments boast that by his tumbling outside Richardson's booth he had tumbled many hundreds of bumpkins inside.

It was not always fair weather with the old showman. At Cambridge once he was taken into custody for refusing to pay taxes for his ground, and would, with his whole company, have been committed to prison, but for the good offices of one Brunton, another travelling showman, who happened to be at Cambridge at the time. Richardson, however, opened his theatre, but the audiences were so scanty that he was nearly ruined, and starvation (to use the familiar phrase) stared him and his players in the face. Brunton again came to his assistance with five guineas, and with this sum the unlucky children of Thespis set out to "busk" their way home to London. Richardson thought at first to have raised some money by pledging his waggons and horses to the landlord of the inn where they were deposited; but he found that the landlord had already a lien upon them for the storage of the waggons and keep of the horses. With one van, then, the company had to set out on the way to town. In this they deposited the women and children, while the showman and two of his company went on in front to pick up what money they could by amusing the rustics with comic songs and so on. One of the *avant-garde* was Tom Jefferies, a clown from Astley's. He was considered to be the best out-door clown of his day. He kept up a continual rattle of a lingo peculiarly his own; and what with his tricks, his conversation, his squint, and his songs, he, in Richardson's phrase, was without a rival in the art of pulling them (their worshippers the public)

into a show. On this particular occasion Jefferies charmed the country folks with a comic song, having for its refrain a great amount of *tidi didi tol lol*, and he thereby caused such a flow of coin into the bankrupt exchequer as to enable the party to reach town in safety. The company bore their misfortunes with that light-hearted patience which distinguishes this peculiar race; and as for the manager, Hazlitt pictured him when he wrote of that "fellow who floats over life as the froth above the idle wave; with all his little expedients and disappointments, with pawned paste buckles, mortgaged scenery, empty exchequer, and rebellious orchestra, he is little less happy than a king, though not much better off than a beggar." Richardson had to pay twice over before he could redeem his waggons, for his first messenger decamped with the cash.

As may be supposed, he often had great difficulty in guiding his self-willed company. He had to humour them a great deal to keep them in good temper with himself and each other. But on occasions he was compelled in self-defence to assume the managerial dignity, and deal out retributive justice to offenders. One actor, by name Grosette, gave him a great deal of trouble. He was an idle sort of fellow with an ineradicable distaste for clean linen and fair water; and those who remember anything of Richardson, who himself only performed the most necessary ablutions, must judge of the nuisance by the fact that he was obliged to discharge Grosette as being really too bad for association with decent strollers. Grosette went away, but reappeared a few days afterwards with clean linen and a very much improved appearance. He was allowed again to enter the company, and it was not discovered until long afterwards that on this occasion he had made free with the showman's own stock of shirts and neckerchiefs.

Richardson like other managers had to keep a sharp look-out for recruits; and he complained that he was being continually robbed of the best members of his company. It was during the winter, when there were no fairs going on, that he used to attend to this part of his business. On a visit of this nature to a private theatre in Queen Anne Street, he discovered the merits of William Oxberry, and engaged him to travel with his troop. Oxberry remained in Richardson's company for two seasons, and then took flight to higher spheres. On one occasion, as the company were travelling to Ascot races, some of them, Oxberry among the number, went on the water. The boat was upset, and the comedian was very nearly being drowned. It was the more unfortunate as none of them had a change of clothes, and they had therefore to hide in the caravan till their clothes were dry. Oxberry, whose darling buckskins did not so soon recover from the effects of a soaking as other less pretentious raiment, was seen next day walking about Ascot racecourse in Oriental costume. Among Richardson's company at this time was Mr. Saville Faucit, the author of the *Miller's Maid*, and the father of the celebrated Helen Faucit. Richardson had the reputation of having brought

out a great many good actors, and some now before the public had their first lessons in his booth.

As we have before mentioned, Bartlemy fair was the scene of the old showman's principal performances. On this occasion he used to have his theatre re-painted and re-decorated, the cost of which, together with that of the new dresses supplied to the performers, reached no contemptible sum. The theatre when fitted up occupied one hundred feet of frontage. The outside platform or "parade" was at a considerable elevation, and the background was of green baize, with crimson curtains depending here and there. The boxes of the money-takers were fitted up in the Gothic style, and adorned with columns and pinnacles. The platform was lighted by a large number of variegated lamps, disposed either as lustres or in wreaths. The band, which brayed continuously, consisted of about ten players, dressed in the style of beef-eaters. On one occasion they were dressed as bishops, but Richardson did not get all the credit he expected from this stroke of invention. The old man himself used generally to keep up a tremendous din on the gong, without which instrument he considered no theatre to be complete. This noise was made for the purpose of drawing attention to the show, and the effect of twenty or thirty different bands and gongs all going at once in different parts of the fair may be more readily conceived than described. The solemn and business-like manner in which Richardson used to rouse the echoes on this gong was the cause of much amusement, indeed his "outside play" altogether has been declared to be worth twice as much as the inside performances of many of his "regular" rivals. He was a shortish man, usually dressed in velveteen knee-breeches, worsted stockings, check or white neckerchief, an old brown coat, and a shocking bad hat. His critics in the press often quarrelled with him about his clothes, and even went so far as to suggest that at Bartlemy fair at least, he might have the decency to appear in a new suit, and that there need be no compunction in parting with old friends when they had begun to leave us. He was no dandy, it must be confessed. On this point we may quote a writer in Leigh Hunt's *Tatler*, who says—

Old Richardson remains alone ;
The last man of his race,
Wearing his old familiar face
 And galligaskins.
For one would almost swear
They were the only pair
That eighteen years since brav'd the summer's baskings ;
Vest, coat, continuations, seem'd the same,
The voice, the gait, and eke the well-known name.

The company during the intervals of the performances paraded up and down the platform, either footing it to the lively strains of the band, or going through some other exhibition likely to draw the gaping crowds into the show. The clown was, however, the king of the parade, and when that part was filled by a good man, he was worth a great deal for his

outside acting alone. The dresses of Richardson's actors were always of the best, and were sometimes very costly. They were much better than those in use at the theatres, for, as the old man used to say, "I have to show my dresses in the daylight, and they must be good, while anything will do for candle-light." He would always choose an actor with stentorian lungs to shout the usual invitation—"Walk up! walk up! the players! the players! The only booth in the fair." He considered this a very important post, and what he called a *bould* speaker was pretty sure of getting the best of what there was in the Richardsonian pie. He left one hundred pounds to a Mr. Cartlich, who used to do this business, and whom Richardson always said he would remember, for he was "such a bould speaker, and might be heard from one end of the fair to the other." He was once applied to by an actor for an engagement. "Ha, muster," said he, "I remember you well. You was one of them bould speakers of the Coburg, but I cannot give you more than 30s. a week." This actor afterwards, to fill up the time, advanced to the front of the platform, and set up the usual shout. Just afterwards old John came running up in breathless haste, crying, "Where is that bould speaker? I must give him five shillings more a week, for I'm blessed if I didn't hear him down at the 'Brig,'" which was a quarter of a mile off.

Inside the booth there was a painted proscenium with green curtains. The orchestra, which was lined with crimson cloth, contained five or six violin players in military costume. The seats of the audience were rows of planks gradually rising from the ground, and beyond a small reserved space between the orchestra and the front seats there was no distinction of boxes, pit, or gallery, although the bills always announced, boxes, 2s.; pit, 1s.; gallery, 6d. It was all gallery in fact. Some impression seems to exist that Richardson was a penny-showman. We do not know that it matters much, but still, as a fact, the entrance-money was never less than sixpence. As many as a thousand persons would sometimes be in the booth at once. Richardson was very anxious that order should be preserved, as he knew well that the persons constituting his audiences would have thought it rather a good joke than otherwise to pull the place down, and would have been glad of any opportunity to enter upon the operation. Sometimes a storm would arise, when the gentlemen in front would insist upon putting up their umbrellas to protect themselves from the rain which would at times come through the roof; loud disturbances followed, of course, but the appearance of old Richardson was usually sufficient to quell the riot. He had a great horror of having his booth fired by the reckless use of lucifer-matches, and would conjure any one whom he saw in possession of those articles to take the "prosperous" things elsewhere.

As to the pieces which were performed, a good idea of them will be gained from the recital of a few of their titles. Richardson's strong leaning was always in the direction of ghosts, and his long acquaintance with the public taste had led him to the conclusion that there was nothing

paid so well as a spectre. If a ghost could not make a piece successful, nothing earthly, in Richardson's opinion, could. His receipt for a drama was "unities for producing effect and cash into the bargain, a gong, blue or red fire, and a bleeding ghost." He expressed his opinion of the *School for Scandal* by saying that "it is a werry pretty piece; but don't you think it would have been better to have a little blue fire behind that screen when it came down?" His performances usually commenced with a melodrama, a pantomime followed, and a panorama wound up the entertainment. Among his bills we find the following pieces announced:—*The Monk and the Murderer, or the Skeleton Spectre*, "with scenery, dresses, and decorations by the first artists, also a view of the Rocks of Calabria, with the appearance of the mysterious monk, the mysterious forest, and a grand combat with shield and battle-axe;" *The Castle of Athlone and Dunbrian, or the Spectre of the North; Donald and Rosaline, or the Spectre of the Rocks; Agnes of Bavaria, or the Spectre of the Danube; The Hall of Death, or Who's the Murderer? The Wandering Outlaw*, which concludes with "the death of Orsina, and the appearance of the accusing Spirit;" *The African on the Desert Island*, "including a grand combat, in which the retributive hand of Providence will manifest its abhorrence of vice, and virtue and constancy be eventually triumphant;" *Marmion, or the Spectre Knight; The Virgin Bride, or the Spectre of the Tomb; The Secret Avengers, or the Hour of Retribution*, and so on. Sometimes his friends of the press would rally him on this point, and state that "during the fair Richardson will produce more *real* ghosts than Mrs. Siddons could ever have personified." He did not, however, take much notice of what they said when he had become old and thick-skinned; but in his younger days he was very ambitious of being noticed by the papers. A certain black sheep practised upon this foible, and used to get money from the showman in consideration of sundry laudatory paragraphs which he represented as having been inserted in various papers through his influence. The demands for money became, however, more frequent than the paragraphs, and Richardson refused to bleed any more. On this the "literary gent" brought him a notice, in which the show was spoken of as a reputable and agreeable place of resort, the writer threatening that, unless "a trifle" were at once forthcoming, he would put *dis* before the adjectives, and so publish the paragraph. The showman paid the money, but ever afterwards exclaimed against "that there atrocious wagabone as edits *The Times*."

Only on one occasion did Richardson ever enter upon the province of the exhibitors of natural curiosities, and this was in the case of a spotted negro boy, "supposed to be a native of one of the Carribee Islands." He brought the showman a great deal of money, and was accordingly much prized by him. Richardson had a portrait of him painted, and engravings were struck therefrom. The portrait now adorns the gallery of Great Marlow Church, and hard by, in the same grave, lie the remains of the old showman and his spotted boy.

The performances in the booth went on thirteen or fourteen times a day in rapid succession, and the amount of labour and drudgery the poor actors had to undergo was fearful. Sometimes petty disagreements would arise between the showman and his company, which were very quickly settled before the adjoining Pie-powder Court—a court where justice was administered “on the nail,” so to speak. These differences did not occur often, for the old man, despite his roughness and vulgarity, had a good heart, as many now living could testify if they chose to do so. He always rewarded his performers for extra exertions, and if it was plain that an actor gave satisfaction to the audience, Richardson would at once raise his salary. He was a punctual paymaster, and used to deal out their salaries to the actors on a drum-head at a certain time every Saturday evening. The scene was usually a merry one. The actors would employ that, their most shining hour, in boyish tricks, such as pushing one another against the manager; who, if he could detect the moving spirit, would either pay him last, or, if very much offended, would forget to invite him to the supper which generally wound up the week.

It was a very common thing for the actors from the regular theatres to pay the booth a visit, but Richardson would never take their money, saying, “No, I never takes money from my brother purfessionals. They can always see my show for nothing and welcome.” An anecdote of this kind is told concerning John Reeve, and a party from the Adelphi, who had come down to the show.

Many ludicrous stories are told of Richardson—generally of such a character as this:—On being asked by a young lady whether there was anything about love in the pieces to be performed, “Oh, yes,” he replied, “all that, miss, for you see the first is *Lovers’ Wows*, and the second un is *Rondywows*.” He declared that he could not see anything in the exhibition of a man 105 years old, for, said he, “if my grandfather had lived he would have been 120.”

The kind-heartedness of the old showman was notorious. He was a regular subscriber of 50*l.* a year to the Green-Coat School Charity at Camberwell. At St. Alban’s a fire had occurred, at which he and his company rendered great assistance. A subscription list was afterwards opened for the relief of the sufferers, and among the other donations was an anonymous gift of one hundred pounds. The corporation discovered the donor, and acknowledged the munificent gift as that of Richardson the showman. He afterwards gave two handsome donations to the town of St. Alban’s, one towards the repair of the town-hall, and the other in aid of the funds for renovating the abbey. Another instance of his generosity is worth recording. Some rascally manager had brought a company down to Greenwich to perform between Easter and Whitsuntide, at a time when Richardson was always encamped at that place, as he did not think it worth while to desert the spot at Easter, only to reappear at Whitsuntide. In due time the rival manager made off with the treasury, leaving the salaries of the actors in arrear, and the actors themselves in dire distress. Richardson,

bearing of their condition, gave orders at various shops for all that they really needed, and invited several of them to come and dine with him in his "carrywan."

In this compendious vehicle he always lived, and regulated his domestic economy with the assistance of his cook and man of all work, Davie. He had built a cottage in Horsemonger Lane, which cottage was sometimes called his *Tusculum*, and was well-known to dramatic aspirants as the place where engagements were sometimes to be heard of. His house was handsomely furnished, but he never cared about living there—the Bohemian spirit was too strong in him. In his last illness he would not be removed from the "wan," even at the urgent advice of the doctors; and it was only within two days of his death, when he had given up all hope, and declared he would take no more doctor's stuff, that he allowed himself to be carried to his house. At last the time came when he might have exclaimed with Rabelais, "Let down the curtain," and with Augustus, "The farce is over:" he died in November, 1836, being then upwards of seventy years old.

Richardson was remarkably temperate, and would tolerate no drunkenness among his company. He left property to the value of upwards of 20,000*l.*, and did not forget those who had contributed to his fortune by their exertions. He left legacies to several of his company, and to two of his musicians 1,000*l.* each. His booth passed into the hands of Messrs. Nelson Lee and Johnson, who used to exhibit a transparency of the old man, in front of the show. Fortune seems, however, to have deserted it on the showman's death. It can now only be seen once a year, we believe, at the Dramatic College Fête.

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MISS GWILT AND THE GORSONS.

Armada.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER X.

MISS GWILT'S DIARY.



JULY 21st, Monday night, eleven o'clock.—He has just left me. We parted by my desire at the path out of the coppice; he going his way to the hotel, and I going mine to my lodgings.

"I have managed to avoid making another appointment with him, by arranging to write to him to-morrow morning. This gives me the night's interval to compose myself, and to coax my mind back (if I can) to my own affairs. I say, 'if I can,' for I feel as if his story had taken possession of me, never to leave me again. Will the night pass, and the morning find me still thinking of the Letter that came to him from his father's deathbed? of the night he watched through, on the Wrecked Ship; and, more

than all, of the first breathless moment when he told me his real Name?

"Would it help me to shake off these impressions, I wonder, if I made the effort of writing them down? There would be no danger, in that case, of my forgetting anything important. And perhaps, after all, it may be the fear of forgetting something which I ought to remember that keeps this story of Midwinter's weighing as it does on my mind. At any rate, the experiment is worth trying. In my present situation I *must* be free to think of other things, or I shall never find my way through all the difficulties at Thorpe-Ambrose that are still to come.

"Let me think. What *haunts* me, to begin with?

"The Names haunt me. I keep saying and saying to myself: Both alike!—Christian name and surname, both alike! A light-haired Allan Armadale, whom I have long since known of, and who is the son of my old mistress. A dark-haired Allan Armadale, whom I only know of now, and who is only known to others under the name of Ozias Midwinter. Stranger still; it is not relationship, it is not chance, that has made them namesakes. The father of the light Armadale was the man who was *born* to the family name, and who lost the family inheritance. The father of the dark Armadale was the man who *took* the name, on condition of getting the inheritance—and who got it.

"So there are two of them—I can't help thinking of it—both unmarried. The light-haired Armadale, who offers to the woman who can secure him, eight thousand a year while he lives; who leaves her twelve hundred a year when he dies; who must and shall marry me for those two golden reasons; and whom I hate and loathe as I never hated and loathed a man yet. And the dark-haired Armadale, who has a poor little income which might perhaps pay his wife's milliner, if his wife was careful; who has just left me, persuaded that I mean to marry him; and whom—well, whom I *might* have loved once, before I was the woman I am now.

"And Allan the Fair doesn't know he has a namesake. And Allan the Dark has kept the secret from everybody but the Somersetshire clergyman (whose discretion he can depend on), and myself.

"And there are two Allan Armadales—two Allan Armadales—two Allan Armadales. There! three is a lucky number. Haunt me again, after that, if you can!

"What next? The murder in the timber-ship? No; the murder is a good reason why the dark Armadale, whose father committed it, should keep his secret from the fair Armadale, whose father was killed; but it doesn't concern *me*. I remember there was a suspicion in Madeira at the time of something wrong. *Was* it wrong? Was the man who had been tricked out of his wife, to blame for shutting the cabin-door, and leaving the man who had tricked him, to drown in the wreck? Yes, —the woman wasn't worth it.

"What am I sure of that really concerns myself?

"I am sure of one very important thing. I am sure that Midwinter—I must call him by his ugly false name, or I may confuse the two Armadales before I have done—I am sure that Midwinter is perfectly ignorant that I and the little imp of twelve years old who waited on Mrs. Armadale in Madeira, and copied the letters that were supposed to arrive from the West Indies, are one and the same. There are not many girls of twelve who could have imitated a man's handwriting, and held their tongues about it afterwards, as I did—but that doesn't matter now. What does matter is, that Midwinter's belief in the Dream is Midwinter's only reason for trying to connect me with Allan Armadale, by associating me with Allan Armadale's father and mother. I asked him

if he actually thought me old enough to have known either of them. And he said No, poor fellow, in the most innocent bewildered way. Would he say No, if he saw me now? Shall I turn to the glass and see if I look my five-and-thirty years? or shall I go on writing? I will go on writing.

"There is one thing more that haunts me almost as obstinately as the Names.

"I wonder whether I am right in relying on Midwinter's superstition (as I do) to help me in keeping him at arm's length. After having let the excitement of the moment hurry me into saying more than I need have said, he is certain to press me; he is certain to come back, with a man's hateful selfishness and impatience in such things, to the question of marrying me. Will the Dream help me to check him? After alternately believing and disbelieving in it, he has got, by his own confession, to believing in it again. Can I say I believe in it, too? I have better reasons for doing so than he knows of. I am not only the person who helped Mrs. Armadale's marriage by helping her to impose on her own father,—I am the woman who tried to drown herself; the woman who started the series of accidents which put young Armadale in possession of his fortune; the woman who has come to Thorpe-Ambrose to marry him for his fortune now he has got it; and more extraordinary still, the woman who stood in the Shadow's place at the pool! These may be coincidences, but they are strange coincidences. I declare I begin to fancy that *I* believe in the Dream too!

"Suppose I say to him, 'I think as you think. I say, what you said in your letter to me, Let us part before the harm is done. Leave me before the third Vision of the Dream comes true. Leave me; and put the mountains and the seas between you and the man who bears your name!'

"Suppose, on the other side, that his love for me makes him reckless of everything else? Suppose he says those desperate words again, which I understand now:—'What *is* to be, *will* be. What have I to do with it, and what has she?' Suppose—suppose—

"I won't write any more. I hate writing! It doesn't relieve me—it makes me worse. I'm farther from being able to think of all that I *must* think of, than I was when I sat down. It is past midnight. To-morrow has come already—and here I am as helpless as the stupidest woman living! Bed is the only fit place for me.

"Bed? If it was ten years since, instead of to-day; and if I had married Midwinter for love, I might be going to bed now with nothing heavier on my mind than a visit on tiptoe to the nursery, and a last look at night to see if my children were sleeping quietly in their cribs. I wonder whether I should have loved my children if I had ever had any? Perhaps, yes—perhaps, no. It doesn't matter.

"*Tuesday morning, ten o'clock.*—Who was the man who invented

laudanum ? I thank him from the bottom of my heart, whoever he was. If all the miserable wretches in pain of body and mind, whose comforter he has been, could meet together to sing his praises, what a chorus it would be ! I have had six delicious hours of oblivion ; I have woken up with my mind composed ; I have written a perfect little letter to Midwinter ; I have drunk my nice cup of tea, with a real relish of it ; I have dawdled over my morning toilet with an exquisite sense of relief—and all through the modest little bottle of Drops which I see on my bedroom chimney-piece at this moment. ‘Drops,’ you are a darling ! If I love nothing else, I love *you*.

“My letter to Midwinter has been sent through the post ; and I have told him to reply to me in the same manner.

“I feel no anxiety about his answer—he can only answer in one way. I have asked for a little time to consider, because my family circumstances require some consideration, in his interests as well as in mine. I have engaged to tell him what those circumstances are (what shall I say, I wonder ?) when we next meet ; and I have requested him in the meantime to keep all that has passed between us a secret for the present. As to what he is to do himself in the interval while I am supposed to be considering, I have left it to his own discretion—merely reminding him that, in our present situation, his remaining at Thorpe-Ambrose might lead to inquiry into his motives, and that his attempting to see me again (while our positions towards each other cannot be openly avowed) might injure my reputation. I have offered to write to him if he wishes it ; and I have ended by promising to make the interval of our necessary separation as short as I can.

“This sort of plain unaffected letter—which I might have written to him last night, if his story had not been running in my head as it did—has one defect, I know. It certainly keeps him out of the way, while I am casting my net, and catching my gold fish at the great house for the second time—but it also leaves an awkward day of reckoning to come with Midwinter if I succeed. How am I to manage him ? What am I to do ? I ought to face those two questions as boldly as usual—but somehow my courage seems to fail me ; and I don’t quite fancy meeting *that* difficulty, till the time comes when it *must* be met. Shall I confess to my diary that I am sorry for Midwinter, and that I shrink a little from thinking of the day when he hears that I am going to be mistress at the great house ?

“But I am not mistress yet—and I can’t take a step in the direction of the great house till I have got the answer to my letter, and till I know that Midwinter is out of the way. Patience ! patience ! I must go and forget myself at my piano. There is the ‘Moonlight Sonata’ open, and tempting me, on the music-stand. Have I nerve enough to play it, I wonder ? Or will it set me shuddering with the mystery and terror of it, as it did the other day ?

"*Five o'clock*.—I have got his answer. The slightest request I can make is a command to him. He has gone—and he sends me his address in London. 'There are two considerations,' (he says), 'which help to reconcile me to leaving you. The first is, that *you* wish it, and that it is only to be for a little while. The second is, that I think I can make some arrangements in London for adding to my income by my own labour. I have never cared for money for myself—but you don't know how I am beginning already to prize the luxuries and refinements that money can provide, for my wife's sake.' Poor fellow! I almost wish I had not written to him as I did; I almost wish I had not sent him away from me.

"Fancy, if Mother Oldershaw saw this page in my diary! I have had a letter from her this morning—a letter to remind me of my obligations, and to tell me she suspects things are all going wrong. Let her suspect! I shan't trouble myself to answer—I can't be worried with that old wretch in the state I am in now.

"It is a lovely afternoon—I want a walk—I mustn't think of Midwinter. Suppose I put on my bonnet, and try my experiment at once at the great house? Everything is in my favour. There is no spy to follow me, and no lawyer to keep me out, this time. Am I handsome enough, to-day? Well, yes—handsome enough to be a match for a little dowdy, awkward, freckled creature, who ought to be perched on a form at school, and strapped to a back-board to straighten her crooked shoulders.

"The nursery lips out in all they utter;
Besides, they always smell of bread and butter."

"How admirably Byron has described girls in their teens!

"*Eight o'clock*.—I have just got back from Armadale's house. I have seen him, and spoken to him; and the end of it may be set down in three plain words. I have failed. There is no more chance of my being Mrs. Armadale of Thorpe-Ambrose than there is of my being Queen of England.

"Shall I write and tell Oldershaw? Shall I go back to London? Not till I have had time to think a little. Not just yet.

"Let me think; I have failed completely—failed, with all the circumstances in favour of success. I caught him alone on the drive in front of the house. He was excessively disconcerted, but at the same time quite willing to hear me. I tried him, first quietly—then with tears, and the rest of it. I introduced myself in the character of the poor innocent woman whom he had been the means of injuring. I confused, I interested, I convinced him. I went on to the purely Christian part of my errand, and spoke with such feeling of his separation from his friend, for which I was innocently responsible, that I turned his odious rosy face quite pale, and made him beg me at last not to distress him. But, whatever other feelings I roused in him, I never once roused his old feeling for me. I saw it in

his eyes when he looked at me ; I felt it in his fingers when we shook hands. We parted friends and nothing more.

"It is for this, is it, Miss Milroy, that I resisted temptation, morning after morning, when I knew you were out alone in the park ? I have just left you time to slip in, and take my place in Armadale's good graces, have I ? I never resisted temptation yet without suffering for it in some such way as this ! If I had only followed my first thoughts, on the day when I took leave of you, my young lady—well, well, never mind that now. I have got the future before me ; you are not Mrs. Armadale yet ! And I can tell you one other thing—whoever else he marries, he will never marry *you*. If I am even with you in no other way, trust me, whatever comes of it, to be even with you there !

"I am not, to my own surprise, in one of my furious passions. The last time I was in this perfectly cool state, under serious provocation, something came of it, which I daren't write down, even in my own private diary. I shouldn't be surprised if something comes of it now.

"On my way back, I called at Mr. Bashwood's lodgings in the town. He was not at home, and I left a message telling him to come here to-night and speak to me. I mean to relieve him at once of the duty of looking after Armadale and Miss Milroy. I may not see my way yet to ruining her prospects at Thorpe-Ambrose as completely as she has ruined mine. But when the time comes, and I do see it, I don't know to what lengths my sense of injury may take me ; and there may be inconvenience, and possibly danger, in having such a chicken-hearted creature as Mr. Bashwood in my confidence.

"I suspect I am more upset by all this than I supposed. Midwinter's story is beginning to haunt me again, without rhyme or reason.

"A soft, quick, trembling knock at the street door ! I know who it is. No hand but old Bashwood's could knock in that way.

"*Nine o'clock.*—I have just got rid of him. He has surprised me by coming out in a new character.

"It seems (though I didn't detect him) that he was at the great house while I was in company with Armadale. He saw us talking on the drive ; and he afterwards heard what the servants said, who saw us too. The wise opinion below stairs is that we have 'made it up,' and that the master is likely to marry me after all. 'He's sweet on her red hair,' was the elegant expression they used in the kitchen. 'Little Missie can't match her there—and little Missie will get the worst of it.' How I hate the coarse ways of the lower orders !

"While old Bashwood was telling me this, I thought he looked even more confused and nervous than usual. But I failed to see what was really the matter until after I had told him that he was to leave all further observation of Mr. Armadale and Miss Milroy to me. Every drop of the little blood there is in the feeble old creature's body seemed to fly up into his face. He made quite an overpowering effort ; he really looked as if

he would drop down dead of fright at his own boldness; but he forced out the question, for all that, stammering, and stuttering, and kneading desperately with both hands at the brim of his hideous great hat. 'I beg your pardon, Miss Gwi-Gwi-Gwilt! You are not really go go-going to marry Mr. Armadale, are you?' Jealous—if ever I saw it in a man's face yet, I saw it in his—actually jealous of Armadale, at his age! If I had been in the humour for it, I should have burst out laughing in his face. As it was, I was angry, and lost all patience with him. I told him he was an old fool, and ordered him to go on quietly with his usual business until I sent him word that he was wanted again. He submitted as usual; but there was an indescribable something in his watery old eyes, when he took leave of me, which I have never noticed in them before. Love has the credit of working all sorts of strange transformations. Can it be really possible that Love has made Mr. Bashwood man enough to be angry with me?

"Wednesday.—My experience of Miss Milroy's habits suggested a suspicion to me last night, which I thought it desirable to clear up this morning.

"It was always her way, when I was at the cottage, to take a walk early in the morning before breakfast. Considering that I used often to choose that very time for *my* private meetings with Armadale, it struck me as likely that my former pupil might be taking a leaf out of my book, and that I might make some desirable discoveries if I turned my steps in the direction of the major's garden at the right hour. I deprived myself of my Drops, to make sure of waking; passed a miserable night in consequence; and was ready enough to get up at six o'clock, and walk the distance from my lodgings to the cottage in the fresh morning air.

"I had not been five minutes on the park-side of the garden enclosure before I saw her come out. *She* seemed to have had a bad night too; her eyes were heavy and red, and her lips and cheeks looked swollen as if she had been crying. There was something on her mind, evidently; something, as it soon appeared, to take her out of the garden into the park. She walked (if one can call it walking, with such legs as hers!) straight to the summer-house, and opened the door, and crossed the bridge, and went on quicker and quicker towards the low ground in the park, where the trees are thickest. I followed her over the open space with perfect impunity, in the preoccupied state she was in; and when she began to slacken her pace among the trees, I was among the trees too, and was not afraid of her seeing me.

"Before long, there was a crackling and trampling of heavy feet coming up towards us through the underwood in a deep dip of the ground. I knew that step as well as she knew it. 'Here I am,' she said, in a faint little voice. I kept behind the trees a few yards off, in some doubt on which side Armadale would come out of the underwood to join her. He came out, up the side of the dell opposite to the tree behind which I was

standing. They sat down together on the bank. I sat down behind the tree, and looked at them through the underwood, and heard without the slightest difficulty every word that they said.

The talk began by his noticing that she looked out of spirits, and asking if anything had gone wrong at the cottage. The artful little minx lost no time in making the necessary impression on him; she began to cry. He took her hand, of course, and tried, in his brutishly straightforward way, to comfort her. No: she was not to be comforted. A miserable prospect was before her; she had not slept the whole night for thinking of it. Her father had called her into his room the previous evening, had spoken about the state of her education, and had told her, in so many words, that she was to go to school. The place had been found, and the terms had been settled; and as soon as her clothes could be got ready, Miss was to go. 'While that hateful Miss Gwilt was in the house,' says this model young person, 'I would have gone to school willingly—I wanted to go. But it's all different now; I don't think of it in the same way; I feel too old for school. I'm quite heart-broken, Mr. Armadale.' There she stopped, as if she had meant to say more, and gave him a look which finished the sentence plainly—'I'm quite heart-broken, Mr. Armadale, now we are friendly again, at going away from *you*!' For downright brazen impudence, which a grown woman would be ashamed of, give me the young girls whose 'modesty' is so pertinaciously insisted on by the nauseous domestic sentimentalists of the present day!

"Even Armadale, booby as he is, understood her. After bewildering himself in a labyrinth of words that led nowhere, he took her—one can hardly say round the waist, for she hasn't got one—he took her round the last hook-and-eye of her dress, and, by way of offering her a refuge from the indignity of being sent to school at her age, made her a proposal of marriage in so many words.

"If I could have killed them both at that moment by lifting up my little finger, I have not the least doubt I should have lifted it. As things were, I only waited to see what Miss Milroy would do.

"She appeared to think it necessary—feeling, I suppose, that she had met him without her father's knowledge, and not forgetting that I had had the start of her as the favoured object of Mr. Armadale's good opinion—to assert herself by an explosion of virtuous indignation. She wondered how he could think of such a thing after his conduct with Miss Gwilt, and after her father had forbidden him the house! Did he want to make her feel how inexcusably she had forgotten what was due to herself? Was it worthy of a gentleman to propose what he knew as well as she did, was impossible? and so on, and so on. Any man with brains in his head would have known what all thisrodomontade really meant. Armadale took it so seriously that he actually attempted to justify himself. He declared, in his headlong blundering way, that he was quite in earnest; he and her father might make it up, and be friends again; and if the major persisted in treating him as a stranger, young ladies and gentlemen

in their situation had made runaway marriages before now, and fathers and mothers who wouldn't forgive them before, had forgiven them afterwards. Such outrageously straightforward love-making as this, left Miss Milroy, of course, but two alternatives—to confess that she had been saying No, when she meant Yes, or to take refuge in another explosion. She was hypocrite enough to prefer another explosion. 'How dare you, Mr. Armadale? Go away directly! It's inconsiderate, it's heartless, it's perfectly disgraceful to say such things to me!' and so on, and so on. It seems incredible, but it is not the less true, that he was positively fool enough to take her at her word. He begged her pardon, and went away like a child that is put in the corner—the most contemptible object in the form of man that eyes ever looked on!

"She waited, after he had gone, to compose herself, and I waited behind the trees to see how she would succeed. Her eyes wandered round slyly to the path by which he had left her. She smiled (grinned would be the truer way of putting it, with such a mouth as hers); took a few steps on tiptoe to look after him; turned back again, and suddenly burst into a violent fit of crying. I am not quite so easily taken in as Armadale, and I saw what it all meant plainly enough.

"'To-morrow,' I thought to myself, 'you will be in the park again, miss, by pure accident. The next day, you will lead him on into proposing to you for the second time. The day after, he will venture back to the subject of runaway marriages, and you will only be becomingly confused. And the day after that, if he has got a plan to propose, and if your clothes are ready to be packed for school, you will listen to him.' Yes, yes; Time is always on the man's side, where a woman is concerned, if the man is only patient enough to let Time help him.

"I let her leave the place and go back to the cottage, quite unconscious that I had been looking at her. I waited among the trees thinking. The truth is, I was impressed by what I had heard and seen, in a manner that it is not very easy to describe. It put the whole thing before me in a new light. It showed me—what I had never even suspected till this morning—that she is really fond of him.

"Heavy as my debt of obligation is to her, there is no fear *now*, of my failing to pay it to the last farthing. It would have been no small triumph for me to stand between Miss Milroy and her ambition to be one of the leading ladies of the county. But it is infinitely more, where her first love is concerned, to stand between Miss Milroy and her heart's desire. Shall I remember my own youth and spare her? No! She has deprived me of the one chance I had of breaking the chain that binds me to a past life too horrible to be thought of. I am thrown back into a position, compared to which the position of an outcast who walks the streets is endurable and enviable. No, Miss Milroy—no, Mr. Armadale; I will spare neither of you.

"I have been back some hours. I have been thinking, and nothing has come of it. Ever since I got that strange letter of Midwinter's last

Sunday, my usual readiness in emergencies has deserted me. When I am not thinking of him or of his story, my mind feels quite stupefied. I who have always known what to do on other occasions, don't know what to do now. It would be easy enough, of course, to warn Major Milroy of his daughter's proceedings. But the major is fond of his daughter; Armadale is anxious to be reconciled with him; Armadale is rich and prosperous, and ready to submit to the elder man—and sooner or later they will be friends again, and the marriage will follow. Warning Major Milroy is only the way to embarrass them for the present; it is not the way to part them for good and all.

"What is the way? I can't see it. I could tear my own hair off my head! I could burn the house down! If there was a train of gunpowder under the whole world, I could light it, and blow the whole world to destruction—I am in such a rage, such a frenzy with myself for not seeing it!

"Poor dear Midwinter! Yes, 'dear.' I don't care. I'm lonely and helpless. I want somebody who is gentle and loving, to make much of me; I wish I had his head on my bosom again; I have a good mind to go to London, and marry him. Am I mad? Yes; all people who are as miserable as I am, are mad. I must go to the window and get some air. Shall I jump out? No; it disfigures one so, and the coroner's inquest lets so many people see it.

"The air has revived me. I begin to remember that I have Time on my side, at any rate. Nobody knows but me, of their secret meetings in the park the first thing in the morning. If jealous old Bashwood, who is slinking and sly enough for anything, tries to look privately after Armadale, in his own interests, he will try at the usual time when he goes to the steward's office. He knows nothing of Miss Milroy's early habits; and he won't be on the spot till Armadale has got back to the house. For another week to come, I may wait and watch them, and choose my own time and way of interfering the moment I see a chance of his getting the better of her hesitation, and making her say, Yes.

"So here I wait, without knowing how things will end with Midwinter in London; with my purse getting emptier and emptier, and no appearance so far of any new pupils to fill it; with Mother Oldershaw certain to insist on having her money back the moment she knows I have failed; without prospects, friends, or hopes of any kind—a lost woman, if ever there was a lost woman yet. Well! I say it again and again and again—I don't care! Here I stop, if I sell the clothes off my back, if I hire myself at the public-house to play to the brutes in the tap-room; here I stop till the time comes, and I see the way to parting Armadale and Miss Milroy for ever!

"*Seven o'clock.*—Any signs that the time is coming yet? I hardly know—there are signs of a change, at any rate, in my position in the neighbourhood.

"Two of the oldest and ugliest of the many old and ugly ladies who took up my case when I left Major Milroy's service, have just called, announcing themselves with the insufferable impudence of charitable Englishwomen, as a deputation from my patronesses. It seems, that the news of my reconciliation with Armadale has spread from the servants' offices at the great house, and has reached the town, with this result. It is the unanimous opinion of my 'patronesses' (and the opinion of Major Milroy also, who has been consulted,) that I have acted with the most inexcusable imprudence in going to Armadale's house, and in there speaking on friendly terms with a man whose conduct towards myself has made his name a by-word in the neighbourhood. My total want of self-respect in this matter, has given rise to a report that I am trading as cleverly as ever on my good looks, and that I am as likely as not to end in making Armadale marry me after all. My 'patronesses' are of course too charitable to believe this. They merely feel it necessary to remonstrate with me in a Christian spirit, and to warn me that any second and similar imprudence on my part would force all my best friends in the place to withdraw the countenance and protection which I now enjoy.

"Having addressed me, turn and turn about, in these terms (evidently all rehearsed beforehand), my two Gorgon-visitors straightened themselves in their chairs, and looked at me as much as to say, 'You may often have heard of Virtue, Miss Gwilt, but we don't believe you ever really saw it in full bloom till we came and called on you.'

"Seeing they were bent on provoking me, I kept my temper, and answered them in my smoothest, sweetest, and most ladylike manner. I have noticed that the Christianity of a certain class of respectable people begins when they open their prayer-books at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, and ends when they shut them up again at one o'clock on Sunday afternoon. Nothing so astonishes and insults Christians of this sort as reminding them of their Christianity on a week-day. On this hint, as the man says in the play, I spoke.

"'What have I done that is wrong?' I asked, innocently. 'Mr. Armadale has injured me; and I have been to his house and forgiven him the injury. Surely there must be some mistake, ladies? You can't have really come here to remonstrate with me in a Christian spirit for performing an act of Christianity?'

"The two Gorgons got up. I firmly believe some women have cats' tails as well as cats' faces. I firmly believe the tails of those two particular cats wagged slowly under their petticoats, and swelled to four times their proper size.

"'Temper we were prepared for, Miss Gwilt,' they said, 'but not Profanity. We wish you good evening.'

"So they left me, and so 'Miss Gwilt' sinks out of the patronizing notice of the neighbourhood.

"I wonder what will come of this trumpery little quarrel? One thing will come of it which I can see already. The report will reach

Miss Milroy's ears. She will insist on Armadale's justifying himself—and Armadale will end in satisfying her of his innocence by making another proposal. This will be quite likely to hasten matters between them—at least it would with me. If I was in her place, I should say to myself, 'I will make sure of him while I can.' Supposing it doesn't rain to-morrow morning, I think I will take another early walk in the direction of the park.

"*Midnight.*—As I can't take my drops, with a morning walk before me, I may as well give up all hope of sleeping, and go on with my diary. Even *with* my drops, I doubt if my head would be very quiet on my pillow to-night. Since the little excitement of the scene with my 'lady-patronesses' has worn off, I have been troubled with misgivings which would leave me but a poor chance, under any circumstances, of getting much rest.

"I can't imagine why, but the parting words spoken to Armadale by that old brute of a lawyer, have come back to my mind! Here they are, as reported in Mr. Bashwood's letter:—'Some other person's curiosity may go on from the point where you (and I) have stopped, and some other person's hand may let the broad daylight in yet on Miss Gwilt.'

"What does he mean by that? And what did he mean afterwards when he overtook old Bashwood in the drive, by telling him to gratify his curiosity? Does this hateful Pedgift actually suppose there is any chance——? Ridiculous! Why, I have only to *look* at the feeble old creature, and he daren't lift his little finger unless I tell him. *He* try to pry into my past life indeed! Why, people with ten times his brains, and a hundred times his courage, have tried—and have left off as wise as they began.

"I don't know though—it might have been better if I had kept my temper when Bashwood was here the other night. And it might be better still if I saw him to-morrow, and took him back into my good graces by giving him something to do for me. Suppose I tell him to look after the two Pedgifts, and to discover whether there is any chance of their attempting to renew their connection with Armadale? No such thing is at all likely—but if I gave old Bashwood this commission, it would flatter his sense of his own importance to me, and would at the same time serve the excellent purpose of keeping him out of my way.

"*Thursday morning, nine o'clock.*—I have just got back from the park.

"For once, I have proved a true prophet. There they were together, at the same early hour, in the same secluded situation among the trees; and there was Miss in full possession of the report of my visit to the great house, and taking her tone accordingly.

"After saying one or two things about me, which I promise him not to forget, Armadale took the way to convince her of his constancy which

I felt beforehand he would be driven to take. He repeated his proposal of marriage, with excellent effect this time. Tears and kisses and protestations followed; and my late pupil opened her heart at last, in the most innocent manner. Home, she confessed, was getting so miserable to her now, that it was only less miserable than going to school. Her mother's temper was becoming more violent and unmanageable every day. The nurse, who was the only person with any influence over her, had gone away in disgust. Her father was becoming more and more immersed in his clock, and was made more and more resolute to send her away from home, by the distressing scenes which now took place with her mother, almost day by day. I waited through these domestic disclosures on the chance of hearing any plans they might have for the future discussed between them; and my patience, after no small exercise of it, was rewarded at last.

"The first suggestion (as was only natural where such a fool as Armadale was concerned) came from the girl. She started an idea, which I own I had not anticipated. She proposed that Armadale should write to her father; and, cleverer still, she prevented all fear of his blundering by telling him what he was to say. He was to express himself as deeply distressed at his estrangement from the major, and to request permission to call at the cottage, and say a few words in his own justification. That was all. The letter was not to be sent that day, for the applicants for the vacant place of Mrs. Milroy's nurse were coming, and seeing them and questioning them would put her father, with his dislike of such things, in no humour to receive Armadale's application indulgently. The Friday would be the day to send the letter, and on the Saturday morning, if the answer was unfortunately not favourable, they might meet again. 'I don't like deceiving my father; he has always been so kind to me. And there will be no need to deceive him, Allan, if we can only make you friends again. Those were the last words the little hypocrite said, when I left them.

"What will the major do? Saturday morning will show. I won't think of it till Saturday morning has come and gone. They are not man and wife yet; and again and again I say it, though my brains are still as helpless as ever, man and wife they shall never be.

"On my way home again, I caught Bashwood at his breakfast, with his poor old black teapot, and his little penny loaf, and his one cheap morsel of oily butter, and his darned dirty table-cloth. It sickens me to think of it.

"I coaxed and comforted the miserable old creature till the tears stood in his eyes, and he quite blushed with pleasure. He undertakes to look after the Pedgifts with the utmost alacrity. Pedgift the elder, he describes, when once roused, as the most obstinate man living; nothing will induce him to give way, unless Armadale gives way also on his side. Pedgift the younger is much the more likely of the two to make attempts at a reconciliation. Such at least is Bashwood's opinion. It is of very little consequence now what happens either way. The only important thing is to tie my elderly admirer safely again to my apron-string. And this is done.

"The post is late this morning. It has only just come in, and has brought me a letter from Midwinter.

"It is a charming letter; it flatters me and flutters me as if I was a young girl again. No reproaches for my never having written to him; no hateful hurrying of me, in plain words, to marry him. He only writes to tell me a piece of news. He has obtained, through his lawyers, a prospect of being employed as occasional correspondent to a newspaper which is about to be started in London. The employment will require him to leave England for the Continent, which would exactly meet his own wishes for the future, but he cannot consider the proposal seriously until he has first ascertained whether it would meet my wishes too. He knows no will but mine, and he leaves me to decide, after first mentioning the time allowed him before his answer must be sent in. It is the time of course (if I agree to his going abroad) in which I must marry him. But there is not a word about this in his letter. He asks for nothing but a sight of my handwriting to help him through the interval, while we are separated from each other.

"That is the letter; not very long, but so prettily expressed.

"I think I can penetrate the secret of his fancy for going abroad. That wild idea of putting the mountains and the seas between Armadale and himself is still in his mind. As if either he or I could escape doing what we are fated to do—supposing we really are fated—by putting a few hundred, or a few thousand miles, between Armadale and ourselves! What strange absurdity and inconsistency! And yet how I like him for being absurd and inconsistent; for don't I see plainly that I am at the bottom of it all? Who leads this clever man astray in spite of himself? Who makes him too blind to see the contradiction in his own conduct, which he would see plainly in the conduct of another person? How interested I do feel in him! How dangerously near I am to shutting my eyes on the past, and letting myself love him! Was Eve fonder of Adam than ever, I wonder, after she had coaxed him into eating the apple? I should have quite doted on him if I had been in her place. (Memorandum:—To write Midwinter a charming little letter on my side, with a kiss in it; and as time is allowed him before he sends in his answer, to ask for time too, before I tell him whether I will or will not go abroad.)

"*Five o'clock.*—A tiresome visit from my landlady; eager for a little gossip, and full of news, which she thinks will interest me.

"She is acquainted, I find, with Mrs. Milroy's late nurse; and she has been seeing her friend off, at the station, this afternoon. They talked of course of affairs at the cottage, and my name turned up in the course of conversation. I am quite wrong, it seems, if the nurse's authority is to be trusted, in believing Miss Milroy to be responsible for sending Mr. Armadale to my reference in London. Miss Milroy really knew nothing about it, and it all originated in her mother's mad jealousy

of me. The present wretched state of things at the cottage is due entirely to the same cause. Mrs. Milroy is firmly persuaded that my remaining at Thorpe-Ambrose is referable to my having some private means of communicating with the major which it is impossible for her to discover. With this conviction in her mind, she has become so unmanageable that no person, with any chance of bettering herself, could possibly remain in attendance on her; and, sooner or later, the major, object to it as he may, will be obliged to place her under proper medical care.

"That is the sum and substance of what the wearisome landlady had to tell me. Unnecessary to say that I was not in the least interested by it. Even if the nurse's assertion is to be depended on—which I persist in doubting—it is of no importance now. I know that Miss Milroy, and nobody *but* Miss Milroy, has utterly ruined my prospect of becoming Mrs. Armadale of Thorpe-Ambrose—and I care to know nothing more. If her mother was really alone in the attempt to expose my false reference, her mother seems to be suffering for it, at any rate. And so good-bye to Mrs. Milroy—and heaven defend me from any more last glimpses at the cottage, seen through the medium of my landlady's spectacles!

"*Nine o'clock.*—Bashwood has just left me, having come with news from the great house. Pedgift the younger has made his attempt at bringing about a reconciliation this very day, and has failed. I am the sole cause of the failure. Armadale is quite willing to be reconciled, if Pedgift the elder will avoid all future occasion of disagreement between them, by never recurring to the subject of Miss Gwilt. This, however, happens to be exactly the condition which Pedgift's father—with his opinion of me and my doings—would consider it his duty to Armadale *not* to accept. So lawyer and client remain as far apart as ever, and the obstacle of the Pedgifts is cleared out of my way.

"It might have been a very awkward obstacle, so far as Pedgift the elder is concerned, if one of his suggestions had been carried out—I mean, if an officer of the London police had been brought down here to look at me. It is a question, even now, whether I had better not take to the thick veil again, which I always wear in London and other large places. The only difficulty is, that it would excite remark in this inquisitive little town to see me wearing a thick veil, for the first time, in the summer weather.

"It is close on ten o'clock—I have been dawdling over my diary longer than I supposed. No words can describe how weary and languid I feel. Why don't I take my sleeping drops and go to bed? There is no meeting between Armadale and Miss Milroy to force me into early rising to-morrow morning. Am I trying, for the hundredth time, to see my way clearly into the future—trying, in my present state of fatigue, to be the quick-witted woman I once was, before all these anxieties came together and overpowered me? or am I perversely afraid of my bed when I want it most? I don't know—I am tired and miserable; I am looking wretchedly

haggard and old. With a little encouragement, I might be fool enough to burst out crying. Luckily, there is no one to encourage me. What sort of night is it, I wonder?

"A cloudy night, with the moon showing at intervals, and the wind rising. I can just hear it moaning among the ins and outs of the unfinished cottages at the end of the street. My nerves must be a little shaken, I think. I was startled just now by a shadow on the wall. It was only after a moment or two that I mustered sense enough to notice where the candle was, and to see that the shadow was my own.

"Shadows remind me of Midwinter—or, if the shadows don't, something else does. I must have another look at his letter, and then I will positively go to bed.

"I shall end in getting fond of him. If I remain much longer in this lonely uncertain state—so irresolute, so unlike my usual self—I shall end in getting fond of him. What madness! As if I could ever be really fond of a man again!

"Suppose I took one of my sudden resolutions, and married him. Poor as he is, he would give me a name and a position, if I became his wife. Let me see how the name—his own name—would look, if I really did consent to take it for mine.

"*"Mrs. Armadale!"* Pretty.

"*"Mrs. Allan Armadale!"* Prettier still.

"My nerves *must* be shaken. Here is my own handwriting startling me now! It is so strange—it is enough to startle anybody. The similarity in the two names never struck me in this light before. Marry which of the two I might, my name would of course be the same. I should have been Mrs. Armadale, if I had married the light-haired Allan at the great house. And I can be Mrs. Armadale still, if I marry the dark-haired Allan in London. It's almost maddening to write it down—to feel that something ought to come of it—and to find nothing come.

"How *can* anything come of it? If I did go to London, and marry him (as of course I must marry him) under his real name, would he let me be known by it afterwards? With all his reasons for concealing his real name, he would insist—no, he is too fond of me to do that—he would entreat me to take the name which he has assumed. Mrs. Midwinter. Hideous! Ozias, too, when I wanted to address him familiarly as his wife should. Worse than hideous!

"And yet, there would be some reason for humouring him in this, if he asked me. Suppose the brute at the great house happened to leave this neighbourhood as a single man; and suppose, in his absence, any of the people who know him heard of a Mrs. Allan Armadale, they would set her down at once as his wife. Even if they actually saw me—if I actually came among them with that name, and if he was not present to contradict it—his own servants would be the first to say, 'We knew she would marry him after all!' And my lady-patronesses, who will be

ready to believe anything of me now we have quarrelled, would join the chorus *sotto voce* :—‘Only think, my dear, the report that so shocked us, actually turns out to be true!’ No. If I marry Midwinter, I must either be perpetually putting my husband and myself in a false position—or I must leave his real name, his pretty, romantic name, behind me at the church door.

“My husband! As if I was really going to marry him! I am *not* going to marry him, and there’s an end of it.

“*Half-past ten.*—Oh dear! oh dear! how my temples throb, and how hot my weary eyes feel! There is the moon looking at me through the window. How fast the little scattered clouds are flying before the wind! Now they let the moon in; and now they shut the moon out. What strange shapes the patches of yellow light take, and lose again, all in a moment! No peace and quiet for me, look where I may. The candle keeps flickering, and the very sky itself is restless to-night.

“‘To bed! to bed!’ as Lady Macbeth says. I wonder by-the-by what Lady Macbeth would have done in my position? She would have killed somebody when her difficulties first began. Probably Armadale.

“*Friday morning.*—A night’s rest, thanks again to my Drops. I went to breakfast in better spirits, and received a morning welcome in the shape of a letter from Mrs. Oldershaw.

“My silence has produced its effect on Mother Jezebel. She attributes it to the right cause, and she shows her claws at last. If I am not in a position to pay my note-of-hand for thirty pounds, which is due on Tuesday next, her lawyer is instructed to ‘take the usual course.’ *If* I am not in a position to pay it! Why, when I have settled to-day with my landlord, I shall have barely five pounds left! There is not the shadow of a prospect between now and Tuesday of my earning any money; and I don’t possess a friend in this place who would trust me with sixpence. The difficulties that are swarming round me wanted but one more to complete them, and that one has come.

“Midwinter would assist me, of course, if I could bring myself to ask him for assistance. But *that* means marrying him. Am I really desperate enough and helpless enough to end it in that way? No; not yet.

“My head feels heavy; I must get out into the fresh air, and think about it.

“*Two o’clock.*—I believe I have caught the infection of Midwinter’s superstition. I begin to think that events are forcing me nearer and nearer to some end which I don’t see yet, but which I am firmly persuaded is now not far off.

“I have been insulted—deliberately insulted before witnesses—by Miss Milroy.

“After walking, as usual, in the most unfrequented place I could pick out, and after trying not very successfully to think to some good purpose

of what I am to do next, I remembered that I needed some note-paper and pens, and went back to the town, to the stationer's shop. It might have been wiser to have sent for what I wanted. But I was weary of myself, and weary of my lonely rooms ; and I did my own errand, for no better reason than that it was something to do.

"I had just got into the shop, and was asking for what I wanted, when another customer came in. We both looked up, and recognized each other at the same moment : Miss Milroy.

"A woman and a lad were behind the counter, besides the man who was serving me. The woman civilly addressed the new customer. 'What can we have the pleasure of doing for you, Miss?' After pointing it first, by looking me straight in the face, she answered, 'Nothing, thank you, at present. I'll come back when the shop is empty.'

"She went out. The three people in the shop looked at me in silence. In silence, on my side, I paid for my purchases, and left the place. I don't know how I might have felt if I had been in my usual spirits. In the anxious unsettled state I am in now, I can't deny it, the girl stung me.

"In the weakness of the moment (for it was nothing else) I was on the point of matching her petty spitefulness by spitefulness quite as petty on my side. I had actually got as far as the whole length of the street, on my way to the major's cottage, bent on telling him the secret of his daughter's morning walks, before my better sense came back to me. When I did cool down, I turned round at once, and took the way home. No, no, Miss Milroy: mere temporary mischief-making at the cottage, which would only end in your father forgiving you, and in Armadale profiting by his indulgence, will nothing like pay the debt I owe you. I don't forget that your heart is set on Armadale; and that the major, however he may talk, has always ended hitherto in giving you your own way. My head *may* be getting duller and duller, but it has not quite failed me yet.

"In the meantime, there is Mother Oldershaw's letter waiting obstinately to be answered ; and here am I, not knowing what to do about it yet. Shall I answer it or not ? It doesn't matter for the present ; there are some hours still to spare before the post goes out.

"Suppose I asked Armadale to lend me the money ? I should enjoy getting *something* out of him ; and I believe, in his present situation with Miss Milroy, he would do anything to be rid of me. Mean enough this, on my part. Pooh ! When you hate and despise a man, as I hate and despise Armadale, who cares for looking mean in *his* eyes ?

"And yet my pride—or my something else, I don't know what—shrinks from it.

"Half-past two—only half-past two. Oh, the dreadful weariness of these long summer days ! I can't keep thinking and thinking any longer ; I must do something to relieve my mind. Can I go to my piano ? No ; I'm not fit for it. Work ? No ; I shall get thinking again, if I take to my needle. A man, in my place, would find refuge in drink. I'm not

a man, and I can't drink. I'll dawdle over my dresses, and put my things tidy.

* * * * *

"Has an hour passed? More than an hour. It seems like a minute.

"I can't look back through these leaves, but I know I wrote the words somewhere. I know I felt myself getting nearer and nearer to some end that was still hidden from me. The end is hidden no longer. The cloud is off my mind, the blindness has gone from my eyes. I see it! I see it!

"It came to me—I never sought it. If I was lying on my deathbed, I could swear, with a safe conscience, I never sought it.

"I was only looking over my things; I was as idly and as frivolously employed as the most idle and most frivolous woman living. I went through my dresses and my linen. What could be more innocent? Children go through their dresses and their linen.

"It was such a long summer day, and I was so tired of myself. I went to my boxes next. I looked over the large box first, which I usually leave open; and then I tried the small box, which I always keep locked.

"From one thing to the other, I came at last to the bundle of letters at the bottom—the letters of the man *for* whom I once sacrificed and suffered everything; the man who has made me what I am. A hundred times I have determined to burn his letters; but I have never burnt them. This time, all I said was, 'I won't read his letters!' And I did read them.

"The villain—the false, cowardly, heartless villain—what have I to do with his letters now? Oh, the misery of being a woman! Oh, the meanness that our memory of a man can tempt us to, when our love for him is dead and gone! I read the letters—I was so lonely and so miserable, I read the letters.

"I came to the last—the letter he wrote to encourage me, when I hesitated as the terrible time came nearer and nearer; the letter that revived me when my resolution failed at the eleventh hour. I read on, line after line, till I came to these words:—

" . . . 'I really have no patience with such absurdities as you have written to me. You say I am driving you on to do what is beyond a woman's courage. Am I? I might refer you to any collection of Trials, English or foreign, to show that you were utterly wrong. But such collections may be beyond your reach; and I will only refer you to a case in yesterday's newspaper. The circumstances are totally different from *our* circumstances; but the example of resolution in a woman is an example worth your notice.

" 'You will find, among the law reports, a married woman charged with fraudulently representing herself to be the missing widow of an officer in the merchant service, who was supposed to have been drowned. The name of the prisoner's husband (living), and the name of the officer (a very common one, both as to Christian and surname), happened to be identically the same. There was money to be got by it (sorely wanted by the prisoner's husband, to whom she was devotedly attached), if the fraud had succeeded. The woman took it all on herself. Her husband was helpless and ill, and the bailiffs were after him. The circumstances, as you may read for yourself, were all in her favour, and were so well managed by her that the lawyers

themselves acknowledged she might have succeeded, if the supposed drowned man had not turned up alive and well in the nick of time to confront her. The scene took place at the lawyers' office, and came out in the evidence at the police-court. The woman was handsome, and the sailor was a good-natured man. He wanted, at first, if the lawyers would have allowed him, to let her off. He said to her, among other things, 'You didn't count on the drowned man coming back, alive and hearty, did you, ma'am?' 'It's lucky for you,' she said, 'I didn't count on it. You have escaped the sea, but you wouldn't have escaped me.' 'Why, what would you have done, if you had known I was coming back?' says the sailor. She looked him steadily in the face, and answered:—'I would have killed you.' There! Do you think such a woman as that would have written to tell me I was pressing her farther than she had courage to go? A handsome woman, too, like yourself! You would drive some men in my position to wish they had her now in your place.'

"I read no farther. When I had got on, line by line, to those words, it burst on me like a flash of lightning. In an instant I saw it as plainly as I see it now. It is horrible, it is unheard-of, it out-dares all daring; but, if I can only nerve myself to face one terrible necessity, it is to be done. *I may personate the richly-provided widow of Allan Armadale of Thorpe-Ambrose, if I can count on Allan Armadale's death in a given time.*

"There, in plain words, is the frightful temptation under which I now feel myself sinking. It is frightful in more ways than one—for it has come straight out of that other temptation to which I yielded in the bygone time.

"Yes; there the letter has been waiting for me in my box, to serve a purpose never thought of by the villain who wrote it. There is the Case, as he calls it—only quoted to taunt me; utterly unlike my own case at the time—there it has been, waiting and lurking for me through all the changes in my life, till it has come to be like *my* case at last.

"It might startle a woman to see this, and even this is not the worst. The whole thing has been in my Diary, for days past, without my knowing it! Every idle fancy that escaped me, has been tending secretly that one way! And I never saw, never suspected it, till the reading of the letter put my own thoughts before me in a new light—till I saw the shadow of my own circumstances suddenly reflected in one special circumstance of that other woman's case!

"It is to be done, if I can but look the necessity in the face. It is to be done, *if I can count on Allan Armadale's death in a given time.*

"All but his death is easy. The whole series of events under which I have been blindly chafing and fretting for more than a week past, have been one and all—though I was too stupid to see it—events in my favour; events paving the way smoothly and more smoothly straight to the end.

"In three bold steps—only three!—that end might be reached. Let Midwinter marry me privately, under his real name—step the first! Let Armadale leave Thorpe-Ambrose a single man, and die in some distant place among strangers—step the second!

"Why am I hesitating? Why not go on to step the third, and last?

"I *will* go on. Step the third, and last, is my appearance, after the announcement of Armadale's death has reached this neighbourhood, in

the character of Armadale's widow, with my marriage certificate in my hand to prove my claim. It is as clear as the sun at noonday. Thanks to the exact similarity between the two names, and thanks to the careful manner in which the secret of that similarity has been kept, I may be the wife of the dark Allan Armadale, known as such to nobody but my husband and myself; and I may, out of that very position, claim the character of widow of the light Allan Armadale, with proof to support me (in the shape of my marriage certificate) which would be proof in the estimation of the most incredulous person living.

"To think of my having put all this in my Diary! To think of my having actually contemplated this very situation, and having seen nothing more in it, at the time, than a reason (if I married Midwinter) for consenting to appear in the world under my husband's assumed name!

"What is it daunts me? The dread of obstacles? The fear of discovery?

"Where are the obstacles? where is the fear of discovery?

"I am actually suspected all over the neighbourhood, of intriguing to be mistress of Thorpe-Ambrose. I am the only person who knows the real turn that Armadale's inclinations have taken. Not a creature but myself is as yet aware of his early morning meetings with Miss Milroy. If it is necessary to part them, I can do it at any moment, by an anonymous line to the major. If it is necessary to remove Armadale from Thorpe-Ambrose, I can get him away at three days' notice. His own lips informed me, when I last spoke to him, that he would go to the ends of the earth to be friends again with Midwinter, if Midwinter would let him. I have only to tell Midwinter to write from London, and ask to be reconciled; and Midwinter would obey me—and to London Armadale would go. Every difficulty, at starting, is smoothed over ready to my hand. Every after-difficulty I could manage for myself. In the whole venture—desperate as it looks to pass myself off for the widow of one man, while I am all the while the wife of the other—there is absolutely no necessity that wants twice considering, but the one terrible necessity of Armadale's death.

"His death! It might be a terrible necessity to any other woman—but is it, ought it to be terrible to Me?

"I hate him for his mother's sake. I hate him for his own sake. I hate him for going to London behind my back, and making inquiries about me. I hate him for forcing me out of my situation before I wanted to go. I hate him for destroying all my hopes of marrying him, and throwing me back helpless on my own miserable life. But, oh, after what I have done already in the past time, how can I? how can I?

"The girl, too—the girl who has come between us; who has taken him away from me; who has openly insulted me this very day—how the girl whose heart is set on him would feel it, if he died! What a vengeance on *her*, if I did it! And when I was received as Armadale's widow, what a triumph for *me*. Triumph! It is more than triumph—it is the salvation of me. A name that can't be assailed, a station that

can't be assailed, to hide myself in from my past life! Comfort, luxury, wealth! An income of twelve hundred a year secured to me—secured by a will which has been looked at by a lawyer; secured independently of anything he can say or do himself! I never had twelve hundred a year. At my luckiest time, I never had half as much, really my own. What have I got now? Just five pounds left in the world—and the prospect next week of a debtor's prison.

"But, oh, after what I have done already in the past time, how can I? how can I?"

"Some women—in my place, and with my recollections to look back on—would feel it differently. Some women would say—'It's easier the second time than the first. Why can't I? why can't I?'"

"Oh, you Devil tempting me, is there no Angel near, to raise some timely obstacle between this and to-morrow, which might help me to give it up?"

"I shall sink under it—I shall sink, if I write or think of it any more! I'll shut up these leaves and go out again. I'll get some common person to come with me, and we will talk of common things. I'll take out the woman of the house, and her children. We will go and see something. There is a show of some kind in the town—I'll treat them to it. I'm not such an ill-natured woman when I try; and the landlady has really been kind to me. Surely I might occupy my mind a little, in seeing her and her children enjoying themselves.

"A minute since, I shut up these leaves as I said I would; and now I have opened them again, I don't know why. I think my brain is turned. I feel as if something was lost out of my mind; I feel as if I ought to find it here.

"I have found it! *Midwinter!!!*

"Is it possible that I can have been thinking of the reasons For and Against, for an hour past—writing Midwinter's name over and over again—speculating seriously on marrying him—and all the time not once remembering that, even with every other impediment removed, *he alone*, when the time came, would be an insurmountable obstacle in my way? Has the effort to face the consideration of Armadale's death absorbed me to that degree? I suppose it has. I can't account for such extraordinary forgetfulness on my part, in any other way.

"Shall I stop and think it out, as I have thought out all the rest? Shall I ask myself if the obstacle of Midwinter would after all, when the time came, be the unmanageable obstacle that it looks at present? No! What need is there to think of it? I have made up my mind to get the better of the temptation. I have made up my mind to give my landlady and her children a treat; I have made up my mind to close my Diary. And closed it shall be.

"*Six o'clock.*—The landlady's gossip is unendurable; the landlady's

children distract me. I have left them, to run back here before post-time and write a line to Mrs. Oldershaw.

"The dread that I shall sink under the temptation has grown stronger and stronger on me. I have determined to put it beyond my power to have my own way and follow my own will. Mother Oldershaw shall be the salvation of me for the first time since I have known her. If I can't pay my note-of-hand, she threatens me with an arrest. Well, she *shall* arrest me. In the state my mind is in now, the best thing that can happen to me is to be taken away from Thorpe-Ambrose, whether I like it or not. I will write and say that I am to be found here. I will write and tell her, in so many words, that the best service she can render me is to lock me up!

"*Seven o'clock.*—The letter has gone to the post. I had begun to feel a little easier, when the children came in to thank me for taking them to the show. One of them is a girl, and the girl upset me. She is a forward child, and her hair is nearly the colour of mine. She said, 'I shall be like you when I have grown bigger, shan't I?' Her idiot of a mother said, 'Please to excuse her, miss,' and took her out of the room, laughing. Like me! I don't pretend to be fond of the child—but think of her being like Me!

"*Saturday morning.*—I have done well for once in acting on impulse, and writing as I did to Mrs. Oldershaw. The only new circumstance that has happened, is another circumstance in my favour!

"Major Milroy has answered Armadale's letter, entreating permission to call at the cottage, and justify himself. His daughter read it in silence, when Armadale handed it to her at their meeting this morning, in the park. But they talked about it afterwards, loud enough for me to hear them. The major persists in the course he has taken. He says his opinion of Armadale's conduct has been formed, not on common report, but on Armadale's own letters; and he sees no reason to alter the conclusion at which he arrived when the correspondence between them was closed.

"This little matter had, I confess, slipped out of my memory. It might have ended awkwardly for *me*. If Major Milroy had been less obstinately wedded to his own opinion, Armadale might have justified himself; the marriage engagement might have been acknowledged; and all *my* power of influencing the matter might have been at an end. As it is, they must continue to keep the engagement strictly secret; and Miss Milroy, who has never ventured herself near the great house since the thunderstorm forced her into it for shelter, will be less likely than ever to venture there now. I can part them when I please; with an anonymous line to the major, I can part them when I please!

"After having discussed the letter, the talk between them turned on what they were to do next. Major Milroy's severity, as it soon appeared, produced the usual results. Armadale returned to the subject of the elopement—and, this time she listened to him. There is everything to

drive her to it. Her outfit of clothes is nearly ready; and the summer holidays, at the school which has been chosen for her, end at the end of next week. When I left them, they had decided to meet again and settle something on Monday.

"The last words I heard him address to her, before I went away, shook me a little. He said: 'There is one difficulty, Neelie, that needn't trouble us, at any rate. I have got plenty of money.' And then he kissed her. The way to his life began to look an easier way to me when he talked of his money, and kissed her.

"Some hours have passed, and the more I think of it, the more I fear the blank interval between this time and the time when Mrs. Oldershaw calls in the law, and protects me against myself. It might have been better if I had stopped at home this morning. But how could I? After the insult she offered me yesterday, I tingled all over to go and look at her.

"To-day; Sunday; Monday; Tuesday. They can't arrest me for the money before Wednesday. And my miserable five pounds are dwindling to four! And he told her he had plenty of money! And she blushed and trembled when he kissed her! It might have been better for him, better for her, and better for me, if my debt had fallen due yesterday, and if the bailiffs had their hands on me at this moment.

"Suppose I had the means of leaving Thorpe-Ambrose by the next train, and going somewhere abroad, and absorbing myself in some new interest, among new people. Could I do it, rather than look again at that easy way to his life which would smooth the way to everything else?

"Perhaps I might. But where is the money to come from? Surely some way of getting it struck me a day or two since? Yes; that mean idea of asking Armadale to help me! Well; I *will* be mean for once. I'll give him the chance of making a generous use of that well-filled purse which it is such a comfort to him to reflect on in his present circumstances. It would soften my heart towards any man if he lent me money in my present extremity; and if Armadale lends me money, it might soften my heart towards *him*. When shall I go? At once! I won't give myself time to feel the degradation of it, and to change my mind.

"*Three o'clock.*—I mark the hour. He has sealed his own doom. He has insulted me.

"Yes! I have suffered it once from Miss Milroy. And I have now suffered it a second time from Armadale himself. An insult—a marked, merciless, deliberate insult in the open day!

"I had got through the town, and had advanced a few hundred yards along the road that leads to the great house, when I saw Armadale, at a little distance, coming towards me. He was walking fast, evidently, with some errand of his own to take him to the town. The instant he caught sight of me he stopped, coloured up, took off his hat, hesitated, and turned aside down a lane behind him, which I happen to know would take him exactly in the contrary direction to the direction in which he was walking

when he first saw me. His conduct said, in so many words, 'Miss Milroy may hear of it; I daren't run the risk of being seen speaking to you.' Men have used me heartlessly; men have done and said hard things to me—but no man living ever yet treated me as if I was plague-struck, and as if the very air about me was infected by my presence!

"I say no more. When he walked away from me down that lane, he walked to his death. I have written to Midwinter to expect me in London next week, and to be ready for our marriage soon afterwards.

"*Four o'clock.*—Half-an-hour since, I put on my bonnet to go out and post the letter to Midwinter myself. And here I am, still in my room, with my mind torn by doubts, and my letter on the table.

"Armadale counts for nothing in the perplexities that are now torturing me. It is Midwinter who makes me hesitate. Can I take the first of those three steps that lead me to the end, without the common caution of looking at consequences? Can I marry Midwinter, without knowing beforehand how to meet the obstacle of my husband, when the time comes which transforms me from the living Armadale's wife, to the dead Armadale's widow?

"Why can't I think of it, when I know I *must* think of it? Why can't I look at it as steadily as I have looked at all the rest? I feel his kisses on my lips; I feel his tears on my bosom; I feel his arms round me again. He is far away in London—and yet, he is here and won't let me think of it!

"Why can't I wait a little? Why can't I let Time help me? Time? It's Saturday! What need is there to think of it, unless I like? There is no post to London to-day. I *must* wait. If I posted the letter it wouldn't go. Besides, to-morrow I may hear from Mrs. Oldershaw. I ought to wait to hear from Mrs. Oldershaw. I can't consider myself a free woman till I know what Mrs. Oldershaw means to do. There is a necessity for waiting till to-morrow. I shall take my bonnet off, and lock the letter up in my desk.

Sunday morning.—There is no resisting it! One after another the circumstances crowd on me. They come thicker and thicker, and they all force me one way.

"I have got Mother Oldershaw's answer. The wretch fawns on me, and cringes to me. I can see, as plainly as if she had acknowledged it, that she suspects me of seeing my own way to success at Thorpe-Ambrose without her assistance. Having found threatening me useless, she tries coaxing me now. I am her darling Lydia again! She is quite shocked that I could imagine she ever really intended to arrest her bosom friend—and she has only to entreat me, as a favour to herself, to renew the bill!

"I say once more, no mortal creature could resist it! Time after time I have tried to escape the temptation; and time after time the circumstances drive me back again. I can struggle no longer. The post that takes the letters to-night shall take my letter to Midwinter among the rest.

"To-night! If I give myself till to-night, something else may happen.

If I give myself till to-night, I may hesitate again. I'm weary of the torture of hesitating. I must and will have relief in the present, cost what it may in the future. My letter to Midwinter will drive me mad if I see it staring and staring at me in my desk any longer. I can post it in ten minutes' time—and I will!

"It is done. The first of the three steps that lead me to the end, is a step taken. My mind is quieter—the letter is in the post.

"By to-morrow Midwinter will receive it. Before the end of the week, Armadale must be publicly seen to leave Thorpe-Ambrose; and I must be publicly seen to leave with him.

"Have I looked at the consequences of my marriage to Midwinter? No! Do I know how to meet the obstacle of my husband, when the time comes which transforms me from the living Armadale's wife, to the dead Armadale's widow?

"No! When the time comes, I must meet the obstacle as I best may. I am going blindfold then—so far as Midwinter is concerned—into this frightful risk? Yes; blindfold. Am I out of my senses? Very likely. Or am I a little too fond of him to look the thing in the face? I daresay. Who cares?

"I won't, I won't, I won't think of it! Haven't I a will of my own? And can't I think, if I like, of something else?

"Here is Mother Jezebel's cringing letter. *That* is something else to think of. I'll answer it. I am in a fine humour for writing to Mother Jezebel.

* * * * *

Conclusion of Miss Gwilt's Letter to Mrs. Oldershaw.

" I told you, when I broke off, that I would wait before I finished this, and ask my Diary if I could safely tell you what I have now got it in my mind to do. Well, I have asked; and my Diary says, 'Don't tell her!' Under these circumstances, I close my letter—with my best excuses for leaving you in the dark.

"I shall probably be in London before long—and I may tell you by word of mouth what I don't think it safe to write here. Mind, I make no promise! It all depends on how I feel towards you at the time. I don't doubt your discretion—but (under certain circumstances) I am not so sure of your courage.

"L. G."

"P.S.—My best thanks for your permission to renew the bill. I decline profiting by the proposal. The money will be ready, when the money is due. I have a friend now in London who will pay it, if I ask him. Do you wonder who the friend is? You will wonder at one or two other things, Mrs. Oldershaw, before many weeks more are over your head and mine."

The Family of Temple.

"THERE is a certain productiveness," says Aristotle, "in the families of men, as in the things that grow in the fields; and, sometimes, if the family be good, extraordinary men are for a certain time produced." Other high authority might be quoted in support of this observation, which is not without its value to historians and biographers. But the truth is that genealogy has suffered at the hands of genealogists. Partly by their ignorance of the higher applications of which it is capable,—partly by the falsities with which they have played into the hands of the fashionable reporter and the fashionable novelist,—they have lowered the credit of a study at once of much historical importance, and of much picturesque interest. Every now and then, however, some event occurs calling attention to the truths with which it is the proper business of genealogy to deal; and the recent death of Lord Palmerston had this, besides so many other points, of higher and more mournful significance. When everything else was being recorded of him, it was also recorded that he was the last male of his family,—a family of very ancient descent, and of high and long-continued intellectual distinction. The fact in itself touched the imagination of a people so keenly alive to the charm of tradition as the English. But those who from an old interest in such questions had become aware how essentially Palmerston was a child of his house—a Temple of the Temples,—naturally felt the weight of the fact more vividly: to them, his death was the fall of an old tree, of an old tower, a tree that would give no more fruit, a tower that would no more shelter human and intellectual life. Let us place ourselves for a little in the position of one of these moralising inquirers; and see from what kind of stock the late Premier came, and how far its history justifies the old belief that every family, like every plant, has a life of its own, and a likeness running through all its leaves and flowers.

Thanks in great measure to the kind of genealogists whom we have indicated in the sentence above, most family histories begin with a fable. The ancients made Plato descend from Neptune, Cæsar from Venus, and Antony from Hercules, just as our own early chronicles derive Alfred from Woden. In modern times our inventions are on a humbler scale, but are equally destitute of historical truth. We fasten on to the Norman baronage, families that rose by the Reformation; and descendants of provincial aldermen, whose names betray a suspicious connection with the old sport of bull-baiting, occasionally hold themselves up as representatives of the mediæval chivalry. The Hamiltons are not content to have helped to put Bruce on the throne, they must needs be sprung from

the Bellomont Earls of Leicester. The Cavendishes are dissatisfied with Wolsey's gentleman-usher, and lay claim to be scions of the higher race of Gernon. It has been the fortune of the Temples to find themselves associated with one of the prettiest legends of the middle ages, which has formed the subject of one of the prettiest poems of our own time. They have been given out as coming from the stout old Earl Leofric, of the Confessor's time, and his lady Godgifa or Godiva, who saved Coventry from a harsh impost by riding through the market-place clad only in her beautiful long hair. Leofric (who died in A. D. 1057) and his spouse are, of course, as really historical personages as the Confessor and Edith. And though the Godiva legend does not occur in the Saxon Chronicle, in William of Malmesbury, or in Florence of Worcester, it is found in Brompton, who flourished in 1193,* less than a century and a half after the date of its heroine. Nor have we a right to doubt the truth of any story simply because there is a noble and daring poetry about it. But as regards the descent of the Temples from Leofric and Godiva, that is a comparatively modern statement. Dugdale knew nothing of it, though he gives a full account of the earl's real successors and family in his *Baronage*, and much information about him, his wife, and their pious and generous doings, in his *Warwickshire*. An earlier writer, and more important for this special question than even Dugdale—a writer whose *Leicestershire* is said to have suggested Dugdale's *Warwickshire*—knew no more of the fact than he. We speak of William Burton, the elder brother of the author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, to whose curious mind his own bore a strong family resemblance. Burton was a Leicestershire squire himself, and in speaking of the lands of "Temple" in Sparkenhoe hundred, near Bosworth, from which the whole family of Temple derived its name, this is what he tells us:—"This land was granted by one of the old earls of Leicester to the Knights Templars. This land was afterwards granted by the Templars to a family of the place called Temple, being of great account in those parts." (Burton's *Leicestershire*, p. 264). Burton, then, knew nothing of the Saxon origin of the family; and it is certain that in the famous Sir William Temple's time they looked upon themselves as having "come in with the Conquest." It is often loosely assumed that a family must be either Norman or Saxon, though Burgundians and Flemings, Angevins and Poitevins, are found among the settlers in England in the stormy and adventurous ages during which the foundations of its modern life were laid. To which of the various races struggling for place and power the founder of the Temples belonged cannot now be known. The earliest names in the pedigree, Robert, William, and Henry, are those of Norman dukes and sovereigns,—an indication which has sometimes been allowed to have suggestive value in such cases. At all events we are safe in assuming that the man to whom

* Wendover, in the next century, adds a slight picturesque touch to Brompton's narrative. Her hair, he says, concealed her, all but her *very white legs—apparentibus cruribus candidissimis*.

the Templars gave land, would have the qualities which the Order of the Temple held in honour; and that he acquired his estate as his descendant acquired the premiership, by being superior to other rivals in the battle of life.

Dismissing, then, the descent from Leofric as fabulous and modern, and trusting to old writers and official pedigrees, we shall be content to derive the Temples from Robertus Temple de Temple Hall, living in the reign of Henry III.—a date to which only something like a tenth part of the peerage can be satisfactorily traced. Robertus de Temple was succeeded by William, and by Henry flourishing in the reign of Edward I., whose marriage with Matilda, daughter of John Ribbesford, is the first that we find upon record. The five generations which followed allied themselves with Langley, Barwell, Dubernon, Bracebridge, and Kingscott,* and the family ranked among the oldest and most considerable of the Leicestershire gentry. By siding, however, with Richard III., they lost most of their estate. Soon after the Reformation what was left came into the possession of some other Temples from Staffordshire, carrying different coat-armour.† And, at last, they, too, sold both the lands and the hall, and though some prosperous cadets of the house—such as the celebrated Sir William and his father—were anxious to recover it, they never could.

We must now turn our attention to those cadets, for it was among them that appeared the eminent men to whom the name owes its modern celebrity. During the reign of Henry VI., a younger son of Temple of Temple Hall, named Thomas, settled himself at Witney in Oxfordshire. In three generations his descendants had acquired land in Warwickshire, and in the sixteenth century his representative acquired Stowe in Buckinghamshire. This was Peter Temple of Marston-Boteler in Warwickshire and Stowe in Bucks, whose eldest son, John, was the ancestor of the Temples of Stowe, and his second, Anthony, of the Viscounts Palmerston. John lies buried at Derset, in Warwickshire, with the following quaint epitaph, testifying to his general felicity and opulence :—

Cur liberos hic plurimos,
Cur hic amicos plurimos,
Et plurimas pecunias,
Vis scire cur reliquerit ?
TEMPELLUS ad plures abiit.

The son of this prosperous gentleman was Sir Thomas Temple, of Stowe, the first baronet. The second and third baronets both sat for the town of Buckingham in the parliaments of the Charleses. The fourth—Sir Richard—fought under Marlborough, and was created Baron Cobham ‡ in 1714, and, in 1718, Viscount Cobham, with remainder to his sister,

* Visitation of Leicestershire : Harl. MS. 1180.

† Burton.

‡ He chose this title, as having a descent from the old Lords Cobham of Kent, first summoned to Parliament in A.D. 1313.

Hester, wife of Richard Grenville of Wooton. This is the Cobham of Pope's well-known lines:—

And you, brave Cobham, to the latest breath,
Shall feel your ruling passion strong in death:
Such in those moments as in all the past,
Oh, save my country, Heaven! shall be your last.

Lord Cobham died without issue in 1749, when his barony and viscounty devolved on his sister, Hester Grenville, mother of the first Earl Temple, ancestress of the Dukes of Buckingham, and, what is of much more moral interest, grandmother of William Pitt. If, again to quote Aristotle, "the having had many illustrious persons in the family" is a necessary mark of nobility, then this is an honour in which the Temples excel houses of much higher pretension.

While the Temple tree planted in Stowe was thus flourishing like a green bay-tree, the branch sprung from Anthony, younger son of Peter Temple, first of Stowe, had acquired a less splendid position but a more brilliant name. Anthony's son William, bred at Eton and Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, became, in the first half of Elizabeth's reign, master of the free school at Lincoln. A Latin essay on a philosophical subject which he dedicated, in 1581, to Sir Philip Sydney, won the admiration of that last rose of the summer of chivalry, who took Temple into his employment as a secretary, and into his intimacy as a friend. Sir Philip died in his arms at Arnheim, and dying commended him to the Earl of Essex, besides leaving him by will an annuity of thirty pounds. The friend of Sydney became the friend of Devereux, and having lost one patron on the field lost another on the scaffold. After the death of Essex, Temple went to seek his fortunes in Ireland. He became Provost of Dublin College, which he represented in the Irish Parliament in 1613. He was afterwards a Master in Chancery, and a knight, and he died at an advanced age in 1625. From this Sir William Temple, the first of the family connected with Ireland, the late Lord Palmerston was sixth in descent. As a Roman would have said, he was the Premier's *tritarus*,—a word which we should have to render in English by great-great-great-great-grandfather! By his wife, a Derbyshire woman, William left a son who became Sir John Temple, and who sustained the intellectual reputation which the family had begun to acquire. He was educated under his father at Dublin. He travelled in his youth. He had access to the court of Charles the First, and to the greatest personages of the time, and he continued the family friendship with the Sydneys. Sir Philip's nephew, Robert Sydney, was now second Earl of Leicester, "a man of great parts," says Lord Clarendon, "very conversant in books, and much addicted to the mathematics." In the Sydney Papers we find the countess writing to her husband (A.D. 1636) of "Sir John Temple, who is *inquisitive in all affairs*, and much your servant." There were tender associations between Temple and the earl's family. Sir John had married Esther Hammond, a sister of Dr. Hammond the celebrated divine. The doctor held the living of Penshurst, and at

Penshurst Temple lost his wife. "Your Penshurst," Temple writes to the earl in 1638, "was the place where God saw fitt to take from me the desire of mine eyes and the most sweet companion of my life; a place that must never be forgotten by me, not only in regard of those blessed ashes that ly now treasured up there, and my desire that by your lordship's favour, *cum fatalis et meus dies venerit*, I may return to that dust, but in respect also of the extraordinary civilities I then received from your incomparable lady." He goes on to show how tenderly Lady Leicester (a Percy, and the mother of Algernon Sydney) had behaved at this great crisis, which all readers of her letters will readily believe. Sir John Temple also writes to the earl from Berwick, where he had accompanied the Court when the king was marching against and negotiating with the Scots; and on another occasion urges him to try for the Secretaryship of State, likely to be vacated by the resignation of Sir John Coke. "And further give me leave," writes he, "to tell your lordship that I think this the proper time to move in, and that I find such stirring now at Court, as I apprehend him not long-lived in his place. So as if you neglect now to stir, *you will have some evil angel take the opportunity while the waters are troubled to help in some stignatick or otherwise infirm person.*" There is a touch of the family wit as of the family shrewdness here; but Sir John Temple found an opportunity of showing still higher qualities. The Earl of Leicester went to Ireland as lord-lieutenant, and appointed Temple (who was knighted in 1640) to an important post. A heavy responsibility, to which he was not unequal, fell upon him when the rebellion broke out. Afterwards, when Leicester was succeeded by Ormond, Temple was imprisoned for opposing the cessation which Ormond was commanded to make with the rebels. This attracted the favourable attention of the Parliament to him, and in 1644 he was exchanged, and made a commissioner in Munster. Never an extreme man however, he was dismissed for voting that the king's proposals from the Isle of Wight were sufficient grounds for peace. Later, he was both employed and rewarded by Cromwell, but that did not hinder him from prospering under the Restoration. He was Master of the Rolls, privy councillor, treasurer, and enjoyed an opulent, and, we are expressly told, "hospitable" old age. He died in 1677. Sir John Temple, besides being a politician, was the author of a *History of the Irish Rebellion*. It has always received the praise of veracity, and one cannot look into it without seeing that the writer was a scholar and a man of sense. What is worthy of notice also, is, that it is written strictly from the point of view of an Englishman, and of an Englishman who had no great respect for the Irish race.

The eldest son of Sir John Temple and Esther Hammond was the famous Sir William Temple, who continued to be the most widely-known man that ever bore the ancient name till the days of the third Lord Palmerston. Born in London in 1628, he was educated at Penshurst, at Bishop Stortford, and at Cambridge under Cudworth, and then set out to travel on the Continent. In passing through the Isle of Wight, where the

King was then imprisoned, he made the acquaintance of Dorothy Osborne, the daughter of Sir Peter Osborne, governor of Guernsey for his Majesty. The youth's father was in the Long Parliament; the young lady's father was a cavalier. Sir John desired a greater match for his son; Sir Peter desired a greater match for his daughter; and their engagement, opposed on both sides, lasted for seven years. During part of this time, William Temple lived in France, where he mastered the French, and in the Low Countries and Germany, where he mastered the Spanish language. He was married at last in 1654, and took up his abode with his affectionate and sprightly Dorothy in Ireland. His head-quarters were in the county of Carlow, where he lived on a moderate income, and spent much of his time in reading, and doubtless in forming that graceful and pleasant style which entitles him to rank among the founders of polite English prose. Happy in his marriage, he was most unfortunate in the health of his children, five of whom died in as many years. The Restoration brought Temple into public life. When an Irish Parliament was called, he was chosen with his father for the county of Carlow, and soon attracting the attention of the new lord-lieutenant, the Duke of Ormond, was introduced by him to the powerful minister, Lord Arlington. His first employment arose out of the first of the Dutch wars of this reign, when he was sent to negotiate with our ally the Bishop of Munster. His success brought him a baronetcy and the post of Resident at Brussels, in which city he was when in 1667 the French invaded Flanders. The power of Lewis now began to alarm Europe. Charles II. had not yet become quite his tool; and Temple was sent to the Hague to conclude with Sweden and Holland the great negotiation known as the Triple Alliance, which gave a check to the French plans. He now became ambassador at the Hague, and made the friendship of De Witt and of the young Prince of Orange. He remained there till French intrigues had reversed the English policy, and driven us into a war with our recent and most natural ally. Temple at once retired to his house at Sheen, his gardens, and his books, and employed himself in writing his excellent *Observations on the United Provinces*, which the Dutch still cherish and make a student's text-book, after the author's countrymen have ceased to read it. From this retreat he was summoned in the autumn of 1673 to conclude a peace with Holland; and next year went there again as ambassador extraordinary to mediate for a general peace, which after much delay was brought about by the treaty of Nimeguen. It was at this period, too, that he took an important part in bringing about the marriage of the Prince of Orange with the Princess Mary, which had such vital consequences for Great Britain.

Up to this time the public life of Sir William Temple had been on the whole eminently successful. He had conducted negotiations of the first consequence, which will always preserve his reputation in the highest rank of diplomatists. He had won the esteem and confidence of the greatest statesmen in Europe. His public character was not only lofty,

but pure ; his private character undeniably, and for that age, even singularly respectable. He might have been expected to have risen a few grades more, and to have left the name of a minister inferior in parts to none, superior in character to all of the ministers his contemporaries. But he had now culminated. The stormiest part of Charles II.'s reign had come, and he shrank from the helm. He was elected to Parliament for the University of Cambridge, and he did nothing in Parliament. He invented a scheme for a new constitution of the Council, which would not work, and soon found that his colleagues were tired of him, and that the king was content he should go. Accordingly he retired once more, sick of the worry of public affairs, to the country, and fixed his residence at Moor Park, near Farnham, in Surrey. "I had learned," he says, "by living long in Courts and public affairs, that I was fit to live no longer in either. I found the arts of a Court were contrary to the frankness and openness of my nature, and the constraint of public business too great for the liberty of my humour and my life. The common and proper ends of both are the advancement of men's fortunes, and that I never minded, having as much as I needed, and what is more, as I desired. . . . I knew very well the arts of a Court are to talk the present language, to serve the present turn, and to follow the present humour of the prince, whatever it is. Of all these I found myself so incapable that I could not talk a language I did not mean, nor serve a turn I did not like, nor follow any man's humour wholly against my own. Besides, I have had in twenty years' experience enough of the uncertainty of princes, the caprices of fortune, the corruption of ministers, the violence of factions, the unsteadiness of councils, and the infidelity of friends; nor do I think the rest of my life enough to make any new experiments."* There is a deep tinge of discontent in this passage, characteristic of Temple, and a right understanding of which is necessary if we would do him justice. His professed love of retirement and independence was no pretence. It can be proved that he was a more honest and patriotic public man than most of his contemporaries, and that he declined offices which would have put him all but at the head of the kingdom. Yet, if philosophy went for something in his withdrawal from politics, so did a certain want of moral stamina, and a conscious unfitness to meet the Essexes, Halifaxes, and Shaftesburys with the weapons which were alone of any use against competitors of their stamp. The distinctive *ethos* of the Temples has been a union of more than usual of the kind of talent which makes men of letters, with more than usual of the kind of talent which makes men of business. The secretary of Essex began with philosophy and prospered in life ; Sir William, too, prospered in life, and liked philosophy. But with a larger share of literary genius than any other Temple, Sir William had a correspondingly larger share of sensitiveness, and did not,—like his father, for instance,—take heartily to the rough work of his vocation, and carry himself

* Temple's *Memoirs* : Part, Third.

successfully through its trials. He loved the retirement of which he talked so much, sincerely, but not enough; and had a hankering after the great world of action that he had quitted, which was often too strong not only for his philosophy, but (through its action on his temper) for the comfort of those who lived with him; as Swift in his youth experienced. "He had an extraordinary life and spirit in his humour," says his sister, Lady Giffard, "with so agreeable turns of wit and fancy in his conversation, that nobody was welcomer in all sorts of company, and some have observed, that he never had a mind to make anybody kind to him, without compassing his designs." But the same superior and sensible woman, while again describing his "humour" as "gay," adds that it was "very unequal, from cruel fits of spleen and melancholy;" the philosopher being, it seems, "subject to great damps from the sudden changes of weather, but chiefly from the crosses and surprising turns in his business, and disappointments he met with so often in his endeavours to contribute to the honour and service of his country, which he thought himself two or three times so near compassing, that he could not think with patience of what had hindered it, or of those that he thought had been the occasion of his disappointment." In short he was only half happy in his own ideally happy life. He loved to think that he was enjoying the intellectual Horatian calm. He translated the *Tyrrhena regum progenies*, and called on Mæcnas to—

Leave fulsome palaces for awhile, and come
From stately palaces that tower so high,
And spread so far; the dust and business fly,
The smoke and noise of mighty Rome,
And cares that on embroidered carpets lie.

But his secret and, probably, half unconscious wish was to be Horace and Mæcnas both in one. He liked to feel that he was enjoying the air from the Sabine Hills and the fresh communion with the sages of Greece, the rather that the pleasure was a pleasure of which only wise men are capable. But he had also a strong, unquiet longing for the Palatine, an uneasy desire to be keeping the Parthians in order, and making his voice heard amidst the snows of the Tanais. No man so divided in feeling and haunted by so many dissatisfied regrets, could be quite happy in the pleasantest retreat. And, whether at Sheen or Moor Park, the retreat of Temple was eminently pleasant. His orange-trees were only rivalled at Fontainebleau and in one spot of Holland; his peaches—by the admission of Frenchmen—equalled those of Gascony; and Italians agreed that at least his white figs bore comparison with any produced on the south of the Alps.* His garden at Moor Park was bounded by a canal in the Dutch fashion, which had the double merit of pleasing his eye and recalling the days of De Witt and the Triple Alliance. But, in spite of all this, and of his lettered recreation, which was a higher kind of gardening in its way, and of the love and affection of sister and wife, a sly east wind or a provoking recollection of Arlington's treachery would poison everything

* Temple's *Essay upon the Gardens of Epicurus, or of Gardening*.

for him for days. Then he was very subject to the gout, which had come to him, he tells us, "from many ancestors," and which fell upon him at the Hague when he was on his last mission. At first he found great relief from *mozo*, an Indian moss recommended to him by a Dutch gentleman, and which used to be burnt against the part affected. But the disease recurred through life, and, helped by "the spleen," caused Sir William many a sad hour. "Don't you remember," Swift writes to Stella, "how I used to be in pain when Sir William Temple would look cold and out of humour for three or four days, and I used to suspect a hundred reasons? I have plucked up my spirits since then, faith; he spoiled a fine gentleman." Temple had, indeed, some of the most disagreeable features of "a disappointed man" in his old age, and, of all human beings, Swift was the one to whom such a contact was most pernicious. Yet—not to overlook the great intellectual benefit that Swift derived from his residence with Temple, so justly pointed out by Lord Macaulay—it is further satisfactory to remember that the last years of their intercourse were happier than the first. Temple must have come to see Swift's merit before he introduced him to King William (of whom the dean used to tell that he taught him to cut asparagus in the Dutch fashion), and before he committed to him the charge of his literary remains.

The works of Sir William Temple are little read now-a-days, a neglect which he shares with greater men. Upon the whole both Macaulay and Thackeray have lowered his reputation too far in the eyes of the great multitude which never looks into such questions for itself. His learning was superficial; his style has become old-fashioned; and few take the trouble to examine the merits of a prose, which, written before the days of Addison or Steele, combines much of the dignity of Clarendon with much of the ease of Dryden. Those who do will be amused to find here and there, among other qualities, the shrewd worldly philosophy and common-sense, the airy social jocosity, with which England was so familiar from the lips of the other Temple who has just joined Sir William in the Abbey. The following passages from Sir William's chapter on the religion of the Netherlands anticipate all the now hacknied philosophy of toleration, and have points which Lord Palmerston might have pricked into some ignorant Scotch presbytery, resisting his counsel to them not to encourage cholera by dirt with the intention of averting it by sham fasting and ungrammatical prayer:—

Now the way to our future happiness has been perpetually disputed throughout the world, and must be left at last to the impressions made upon every man's belief and conscience, either by natural or supernatural arguments and means, which impressions men may disguise or dissemble, but no man can resist. For belief is no more in a man's power than his stature or his feature; and he that tells me I must change my opinions for his, without other arguments that have to me the force of conviction, may as well tell me I must change my grey eyes for others like his that are black, because these are lovelier or more in esteem. He that tells me I must inform myself, has reason if I do it not. But if I endeavour it all that I can, and perhaps more than he ever did, and yet still differ from him; and he, that, it may be, is idle, will have me study on, and inform myself better, and so to the end of my life; then I easily understand what he means by informing, which is in short that I must do it till I come to be of his opinion. . . . A man that tells me my opinions are absurd

or ridiculous, impertinent or unreasonable, because they differ from his, seems to intend a quarrel instead of a dispute, and calls me fool or madman with a little more circumstance, though perhaps I pass for one as well in my sense as he. . . . Yet these are the common civilities, in religious arguments, of sufficient and conceited men, who talk much of right reason, and mean always their own, and make their private imagination the measure of general truth. But such language determines all between us, and the dispute comes to an end in these words at last, which it might as well have ended in at first, that he is in the right, and I am in the wrong. . . .

Nor could I even understand how those who call themselves, and the world usually calls, *religious men*, come to put so great weight upon those points of belief which men never have agreed in, and so little upon those of virtue and morality in which they have hardly ever disagreed.*

The *form* of such passages as these is old-fashioned. But the spirit is essentially modern, and is the same spirit of critical, but not irreverent common-sense, which made Lord Palmerston for a long time peculiarly distasteful to fanatics. Sir William Temple, in consequence of such writing, and of his disposition for handling such questions in the tone of a man of the world, was called an "Epicurean,"—a title which was bestowed in its bad acceptance, but which he was quite content to bear, and indeed assumed to himself, in its good one.

The last years of Sir William Temple were disturbed by family losses and bodily infirmity. He long survived a beloved daughter. His only son died before him. His wife died in 1694. The natural toughness of the stock carried him on to his seventieth, as it had his father to his seventy-seventh year, and the end came in 1698. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, according to the subjoined directions in his will :—

I do order my body to be interred in the West Ile of Westminster Abbey, near those two dear pledges, my wife and my daughter Diana, that lye there already, and that after mine and my sister Giffard's decess, a large stone of black marble may be set up against the wall, with this inscription :—

SIBI SUIQUE CHARISSIMIS
DIANÆ TEMPLE DILECTISSIMÆ FILLE,
DOROTHEÆ OSBOEN CONJUNCTISSIMÆ CONJUGI,
ET MARTHE GIFFARD OPTIMÆ SORORI,
HOC QUAECUNQUE MONUMENTUM
FONI CURAVIT
GULIELMUS TEMPLE BARONETTUS.

Lady Giffard died in 1722, when the monument was placed where Temple had desired.

The son who died in Temple's life-time had married a French lady, by whom he left two daughters, one of whom became the wife of her cousin, a son of Sir John Temple, and the other of Bacon of Shrubland in Suffolk. Both lines failed between Sir William's age, and our own ; and he was represented by the late Lord Palmerston, a lineal descendant of his younger brother.†

This younger brother was Sir John Temple, who is spoken of as

* *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands*, cap. 6.

† Courtenay's *Memoirs of Sir William Temple*. Of course it is not our business, in a paper like this, to trace out every Temple that may possibly exist, but only the lines from which distinguished men have come.

"the best lawyer in Ireland." He sat for Carlow, was Speaker of the Irish House of Commons before he was thirty, and was long first solicitor and then attorney-general in the sister kingdom. It was to him that Archbishop Sheldon paid what has justly been called, for an archbishop, the "singular compliment" that "he had the curse of the Gospel, because all men spoke well of him." What we know of him shows that he had the talent and the personal popularity of his line. His wife was the daughter of Sir Abraham Yarner, muster-master-general for Ireland. He died in East Sheen, Surrey, in 1704.

To Sir John succeeded his son Henry, created Viscount Palmerston in 1722. In the preamble to his patent he is said to be come of illustrious ancestors; and it is added that his grandfather and father had discharged public duties in Ireland with fidelity, prudence, and abstinence—"præclaris ortum majoribus," "*avus et pater muneribus in Hibernia publicis fide, prudentia et abstinencia functi sunt.*" His wife was Anne, daughter of Abraham Houblon of London,—the Temple marriages being nearly always, it is worth remarking, with Englishwomen, and with Englishwomen of the middle class. The first viscount sat in Parliament for East Grinstead from 1727 to 1732; for Bossiney in 1734; for Weobley in 1741. His life was prolonged till the year 1757, when he died at Chelsea at the great age of eighty-four. He was succeeded by his grandson, the second viscount,—his son Henry having died before him, leaving an heir by his second wife, the daughter of Barnard, Lord Mayor of London.

The second viscount, father to the late Prime Minister, seems to have been a true Temple of the lighter and gayer Temple pattern. There are different kinds of family likenesses; in some men the graver and solidier, in others, the more brilliant aspects of the line are reproduced. Lord Palmerston was in the Admiralty from 1766 to 1777. But during the greater part of that period our Navy had little to do the doing of which could be much affected by Admiralty administration. And at the end of it, such events as Sir Peter Parker's failure before Charleston (July, 1776), were not calculated to throw a glorious light on the government under which they had been undertaken. Horace Walpole, writing to Mason in 1778, quotes, with much applause, a little sketch of Lord Palmerston, by Tickell, the grandson of Addison's friend* and a wit of that period of real merit. "Lord Palmerston," says Walpole, citing Tickell, "*fineers* (what an admirable word) rebuses and charades with chips of poetry; and when Lord of the Admiralty, like Ariel, wrecked navies with a song;—sure that is an excellent application." He is elsewhere mentioned by Walpole, as a patron of art; as a writer of verses sometimes good, sometimes bad; as a guest at Topham Beauclerk's, talking loud in the presence of Garrick, Burke, and Gibbon; as a *dilettante* of rank, in fact, with brains enough to admire brains, but not enough to be distinguished for them. A greater and an honester man than Walpole seems, however, to have liked him. "On Tuesday," writes Johnson to Boswell, in July, 1783, "I took an

* And maternal grandfather, we believe, of Mr. Roebuck.

airing to Hampstead, and dined with The Club, where Lord Palmerston was proposed, and *against my advice* rejected.* But, indeed, no competent judge will deny the possession of superior talent, nay of a fine and delicate kind of talent, to the author of the following :—

INSCRIPTIVE VERSES WRITTEN BY A GENTLEMAN WHOSE LADY DIED AT
BRISTOL WELLS.

Whoe'er, like me, with trembling anguish brings,
His heart's whole treasure to fair Bristol's springs;
Whoe'er, like me, to soothe disease and pain,
Shall pour these salutary waves in vain;
Condemned like me to hear the faint reply,
To mark the fading cheek, the sinking eye,
From the chill brow to wipe the damp of death,
And watch with dumb despair the shortening breath;
If chance direct him to this artless line,
Let the sad mourner know his griefs were mine.
Ordained to lose the partner of my breast,
Whose beauty warmed me, and whose friendship blest,
Framed every tie that binds the soul to prove,
Her duty friendship, and her friendship love.
Yet soon remembering that the parting sigh,
Ordains the just to slumber, not to die,
The starting tear I checked, I kissed the rod,
And not to earth resigned her, but to God.†

The second Viscount Palmerston was twice married. His first wife, a daughter of Sir Francis Poole, of Poole, in Cheshire, died leaving no issue in 1769. He married again at Bath in 1783, Miss Mary Mee, described as daughter of Benjamin Mee, Esq., of that city, who was mother of the statesman just dead. The second viscount died in Hanover Square in 1802, when little more than sixty years of age.

It is no part of our present plan to write the biography, or discuss the career, of the third Viscount Palmerston so recently taken away. To us, for our immediate purposes, he is neither a Whig nor a Tory, but a Temple,—“the last fruit off an old tree,” as Mr. Landor called his latest book—the final product of a race of English gentry. We have sketched the persons and fortunes of his house, to show that the kind of strength, and sagacity, liveliness of mind, and felicity of temperament, which made his success, were really the sources of the success of his ancestry; and that, if he was emphatically English, it was by dint of being in his own person a bit of English history. The lesson of such a narrative will not be useless, if it helps to show how subtly one age connects itself with another, and repeats itself in another; and how often what we are apt to think the most characteristic men and things of our own time, spring from roots deeply embedded in the past.

* He was elected afterwards, as Boswell tells us.

† First printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May, 1777. The question of Lord Palmerston's authorship having been mooted in *Notes and Queries*, the lines were assigned to him, “on the best authority,” by Mr. Wilson Croker.

